

JUDAISM

BICENTENNIAL ISSUE

AMERICA: A *NOVUM* IN JEWISH EXPERIENCE

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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American Jewish Congress

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JUDAISM

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a world-view on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

Basically, the contents of this Bicentennial Issue of JUDAISM speak for themselves. The two hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence obviously suggests both retrospect and prospect, a survey of the past, an evaluation of the present and, in however limited a sense, a forecast of the future.

The first section of this issue, "American Jewry, A Bicentennial Survey," opens with a paper by the editor on "America, A *Novum* in Jewish Experience." It seeks to relate the American Jewish community to the historic Jewish communities of the past, and to indicate both their affinities as well as their elements of difference.

Two papers discuss the role of the Jew in higher education; one, by *Alfred Jospe*, "The Jew on the College Campus" focuses primarily on the student, and the other, by *Daniel Jeremy Silver*, "The American University and Jewish Learning," looks at the relatively new position of Jewish learning in the academic community. The different schools of Jewish religious thought and practice are treated by *Gilbert S. Rosenthal* in "Jewish Religion in America: A Study in Mutuality." The related fields of economics and politics are dealt with in "Jews and Contributions to Economics: A Bicentennial Review," by *Mark Perlman* and "The Jewish Contribution to American Politics," by *Henry L. Feingold*, respectively.

While this symposium does not exhaust the subject, and several areas are left untreated because of factors beyond our control, I believe that an adequate portrait of the American Jew emerges, with his basic lineaments clearly indicated.

The second section of this Bicentennial issue, "Aspects of the Jewish Experience in America," contains a collection of papers dealing with some of the vast variety of interests and concerns to be found in contemporary Jewish life.

In his paper, "The Holocaust in American-Jewish Fiction: A Slow Awakening," *Edward Alexander* offers a trenchant criticism of many American Jewish writers who, with few exceptions, have ignored the Holocaust and its implications, while spending their energies on relatively minor aspects of the human condition. This criticism holds true even of some who have dealt with "Jewish" themes.

On the other hand a writer using Hebrew or Yiddish as his medium could not remain silent or indifferent. Language is more than a vehicle of expression. It expresses the soul of a people. A case in point is afforded by *Chaim Grade*, one of the greatest of Jewish writers today, using any language, who lives and works in America. Though avowing himself a secularist, he is, in every fiber of his being, deeply rooted in the Jewish

tradition. In his paper, "Chaim Grade and the Jewish Ego," *Moshe Moskowitz* analyzes the Jewish component in some of Grade's recent work.

The variety of Jewish religious experience in America is, in no slight degree, the result of the deeply rooted pluralism of the American scene which expresses itself in mutual respect for differences. One could hardly imagine two Jewish theologians further apart than Abraham J. Heschel and, *l'havdil bein haḥayyim vehaḥayyim*, Mordecai M. Kaplan, both of whom served with great distinction on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. These two influential figures are treated by *S. Leonard Breslauer* in "Abraham Joshua Heschel's 'Biblical Man' in Contextual Perspective" and by *Mel Scult* in "The Sociologist as Theologian."

Two papers deal with the Founding Fathers. *Arthur Chiel* treats of Benjamin Franklin's Biblical approach in his paper, "Benjamin Franklin, His Genesis Text." *Lenn Evan Goodman*, in his paper, "Equality and Human Rights: The Lockean and the Judaic Views," maintains that, contrary to the widely accepted opinion, the secular theory of John Locke was not parallel with, but, rather, contradictory to, the concept of human dignity that is enshrined in the Biblical tradition.

There is a widely held assumption, shared by many observers, that anti-Semitism has no deep roots in American life. It is argued that the prejudice is essentially of recent origin, and that its manifestations tend to be secondary, if not downright trivial. This view of Jew-hatred is common among historians, as well as the generality of Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

This thesis is challenged by *Michael Dobkowski* in his paper, "The Anti-Semitic 'Imaging' of the Jew in America." On the basis of a wealth of documentation, only part of which is reproduced in his paper as it appears in our columns, he demonstrates that both the first and the second half of the nineteenth century had strong anti-Semitic characteristics. This prejudice was reflected in all phases of the national culture, religious and secular, popular and elitist. These strong roots of anti-Semitism in American life would explain the ease with which demagogues and propagandists have been able to revive active anti-Semitism in periods of crisis, and the persistence of passive anti-Semitism even in "normal times." At the very least, the dominant view would need to be modified as a result of the considerations advanced in the article.

One interesting facet of American Jewish life has been the field of sport. In "Hakoah in New York (1926-1932): A New Dimension for American Jewry," *Benjamin Horowitz* traces the history of an outstanding Jewish soccer team that did much, during its heyday, to heighten Jewish consciousness, particularly among the youth.

R.G.

America—A Novum in Jewish Experience

ROBERT GORDIS

IN THIS YEAR MARKING THE BICENTENNIAL OF American independence, it may be noted that American Jewry is one and a half times as old as the United States. The American Jewish community had its inception in 1654; America was born nearly a century and a quarter later. As we look back upon the record, several other conclusions emerge. America has been good for Jews, and Jews have been good for America. Whether America has been equally good for Judaism is more debatable, but I believe that, after all the positive and negative factors are balanced, the answer is in the affirmative. Finally, though the American Jewish community has affinities with its predecessors, it is essentially a *novum*; it is unique in Jewish historic experience.

To test the validity of this last contention, we need to recognize the existence of three types of Jewish community during the three millennia and more of Jewish history.

The first category, the *natural community*, existed in ancient Palestine during the First and Second Commonwealths. This type of community was rooted in its own soil and possessed its own organs of government.

As a consequence, the natural community was largely *self-determining*, to the extent to which any people living upon its own soil may be described as being the master of its own destiny. Even during the periods of Jewish subjection to foreign powers—Persian, Greek, Egyptian, or Roman—Palestinian Jewry possessed local autonomy, which included religious and cultural activity and its own legal and judicial system. A Jewish child born in Palestine during the period of national independence or autonomy had a sense of loyalty to no other community except the Jewish one. Barring a violent act of apostasy or treachery, he grew naturally into the institutions of Jewish life, which he regarded as his natural environment.

With the Roman Exile and the rise of the Diaspora after the year 70 C.E., another type, the *compulsory community*, appears on the stage of Jewish history, taking on varied forms in ancient Babylonia, in Christian Spain, and in medieval Poland. In the later Middle Ages, it developed the now familiar pattern of the ghetto in Christian Europe and the mellah in Islamic lands.

The basic distinction of the compulsory community is that it is *not self-determining*. Juridically speaking, the basis for the participation of Jews in Jewish community life was not their own volition but the organized pressure of the non-Jewish state. It is not to be imagined for a moment that there were no inner sanctions in Jewish life, no loyalties universally

felt and deeply rooted. But the individual Jew was not asked whether he wished to associate himself with the Jewish community or not; he was compelled to do so by the "host" community in which he lived.

The implications of this fact are far-reaching. In the medieval state, the Jew as an individual had no official existence; he was a cell of the Jewish community. In levying taxes upon Jews, the government would place the assessment upon the Jewish community as a whole, which, in turn, would allocate a share to each individual member. The most important consequence was that the compulsory Jewish community, like the natural one, had the power to enforce taxation upon its members. The significance of this function can scarcely be exaggerated, for the right to tax means the right to govern and, therefore, to organize and influence every aspect of life, not merely the economic one.

In spite of the basic difference between the natural and the compulsory types of community, they possessed far-reaching similarities. In reality, the natural community was compulsory for the average Jew because no other was normally within reach, and the compulsory community was natural because no other was generally conceivable. Hence, both communities may be described as *exclusive*.

While it is true that some Jews, especially of the wealthier and more privileged classes, might be lost to their people through assimilation or conversion, whether voluntary or forced, escape for the Jews as a group was impossible.

Both categories of social structure were also all-inclusive. In ancient Palestine, each Jew was a member of a group that shared all aspects of human life, such as geographical contiguity, economic interdependence and political unity. Moreover, all the religious and cultural values of life were created and maintained by the community.

In the Middle Ages, the Kehillah legislated for its members; it maintained a system of courts with power to enforce decisions in civil, criminal, and ritual cases. It maintained the synagogues, schools, bath-houses, slaughtering houses, and cemeteries. It supported a varied network of charitable, educational and social groups. It provided leadership and funds to defend the community against attack from without. This was true of the Babylonian Exilarchate, of the Spanish *Aljama*, and of the Polish *Vaad Arba Arazot* (The Council of the Four Lands). By virtue of these functions, the Jewish community became the all-inclusive agency for all group needs and activities.

Both types of community expressed an *organic* view of Judaism. The multiplicity of concerns and activities were more than a matter of adding one to another. The activities that today we are accustomed to pigeon-hole and categorize under such distinct rubrics as religion, culture, education, civic defense and philanthropy were organically related to one another, woven into a single pattern, each inseparable from the totality

and from one another, reenforcing each other and strengthening the whole.

Finally, neither type of community was troubled by what may be described as the hallmark of the modern Jew, the problem of his individual status and the character of his group life. Nowhere in the Bible or in the Talmud do we find any discussion as to whether the Jews are a religion, a nationality, or a "race." Even the medieval Jewish philosophers did not concern themselves with this issue. Until modern times, it sufficed to recall the formulation derived from the *Zohar*, "God, Israel, and the Torah are one," a classic statement of the organic relationship linking religion, culture and peoplehood, in all of which each Jew was involved. Until the modern age, Jews were not affected by an "identity crisis," to use the term created by the contemporary psychologist, Erik Erikson, who is himself a prime example of the syndrome.

The modern era was not ushered in for the Jewish people at one fixed point in time. In Eastern Europe, in most respects, the Middle Ages continued into the twentieth century. In Western Europe, the death-knell of the compulsory community was sounded at the turning of the eighteenth century, when the legions of the French Republic and of Napoleon carried the slogan "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality" to almost every corner of the continent. But the civil emancipation of the Jews that was proclaimed by the French Assembly on September 28, 1791, was no all-conquering tide. On the contrary, it varied with the ebb and flow of liberalism and reaction in the various states of nineteenth century Europe. But each receding wave of reaction was unable to undo completely the changes previously achieved. In this piecemeal fashion the Jews of Germany, Italy and France were given substantial political rights and civic equality, and opportunities for economic progress and cultural achievement were opened up to them. Ultimately, the Emancipation triumphed, in most essentials, throughout Western and Central Europe, even though the army, "high society," and even the universities gave scant practical recognition to the new ideals.

Preceding the Emancipation and providing its intellectual foundations was the far-flung movement of the Enlightenment. The philosophers of the eighteenth century, principally in France and England, but also in Italy and Germany, adopted reason as the instrument of human redemption and rediscovered the fundamental truth of the unity and equality of mankind. With reason as their touchstone, they subjected every element of the social and cultural structure of their times to rigorous analysis. The state, education, religion, the family, the status of women, the criminal code, and the moral system, all came under their critical scrutiny and were found wanting.

The impact of the ideas of the Enlightenment upon organized Christianity was severe. Upon Judaism it was catastrophic, for, after centuries

behind its ghetto walls Judaism had all but lost touch with contemporary life and thought. Judaism in the eighteenth century was far narrower in compass and far more thoroughly isolated from the philosophy and science of its day than it had been in medieval Spain, Provence or Italy.

With the advantage of two hundred years of hindsight, we today can recognize that there were significant limitations in the outlook of the Emancipation and the Enlightenment. Though the Emancipation was a great step forward in the outlook of mankind toward freedom, it was not the final step. It represented the victory of individualism. With the collapse of the feudal system came the age of the middle class, and the transfer of power to the *entrepreneurs* of the Industrial Revolution. Its viewpoint on government and economics was succinctly summed up in the philosophy of *laissez faire*. In our age of ever more complex technology and massive constellations of power, it is clear that individualism cannot sustain either the economic or the political system.

Moreover, the Enlightenment, with its apotheosis of reason, did not appreciate the importance of the non-rational, emotional components of human life. Consequently, there was a downgrading of the power and value of rites and customs arising from specific historical experience, whether individual or collective, scorning them as meaningless or even as downright pernicious. The Emancipation was incomplete in another crucial respect. In emphasizing the individual rights of man, the thinkers of the eighteenth century looked upon the group relations of man as external, insignificant, and artificial. They did not understand that, like a man's economic status, his cultural interests, his ethnic roots, his religious loyalties, and his social ideals all constitute essential elements of his personality, without which he is scarcely human. For the advocates of the Emancipation, the Jewishness of Jews was accidental and, therefore, expendable. Hence, the Emancipation, for all its positive achievements, created a crisis for Judaism, because *it failed to accord to Jews the right to spiritual self-determination, to the preservation of their group-identity, and to the cultivation of their group-interests*. To modify slightly a statement of Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan, the Emancipation gave Jews the right not to be Christians without recognizing their need to be Jews.

It was not long before the results of the Age of Reason for Jews and Judaism became clear. The Emancipation destroyed the structure of the Jewish community, while the Enlightenment undermined the authority of the Jewish tradition.

The one shining exception to the disintegration of the older categories of community structure is the State of Israel. Here a return to the natural community has been effected. Yet, even there, the Enlightenment and the Emancipation pose complex problems that cannot be analyzed here.

What has emerged in the Diaspora is a new type of Jewish association, the *voluntary community*, which exists today throughout the free world.

The area of the voluntary Jewish community embraces Western Europe, the United States and Canada. It also includes countries that have abandoned democracy only recently, like South Africa and some parts of South America. Here the Jewish position is often threatened, but the juridical status of Jews has not been changed—at least not yet.

In the voluntary community, each individual Jew is a citizen of his country with political equality, civic rights, economic and cultural opportunity. There is no single organ governing all Jews and directing all Jewish concerns. Multiplicity is the order of the day, with its attendant evils of duplication, competition and waste. Each Jew is free to involve himself in whatever aspects of Jewish life appeal to him—or in none. He is, in fact, free to leave the Jewish community completely at any time, whether through an official act like conversion, or unofficially through personal alienation and attrition of interest. Assimilation, therefore, becomes a major threat to Jewish survival, with intermarriage its most obvious and statistically verifiable manifestation. In other words, the voluntary Jewish community must struggle to survive in an open society in which traffic moves freely in both directions.

There is one other significant trait of the voluntary community which sets it apart from its predecessors—it is no longer exclusive. Jews now regard themselves as belonging wholeheartedly and unequivocally to two communities, the Jewish and the general. Even without anti-Semitism to remind them, they are conscious that there are problems of accommodation involved in living in two cultures. By and large, however, Jews living in open societies believe that the problems are soluble. What is more, they are convinced that each focus of loyalty enriches and deepens the quality of the other.

The American community is the outstanding example of “the open society” in the world today. There are three basic characteristics of Jewish life in that “open society.” The first is the determination on the part of the majority of Jews to retain loyalty both to the values of the Jewish heritage and to the ideals and interests of the larger community. The second is the availability of avenues of exit from the Jewish community. The roads of escape are chosen by a minority, to be sure, but these defections are by no means unimportant, either quantitatively or qualitatively. The third trait emerges from the first two—the need to wage an unremitting battle for the significant survival of Jews and their heritage.

There have been several Jewish communities in the past that possessed these basic characteristics, pre-eminently ancient Alexandria, medieval Spain and pre-Nazi Germany. In all these instances, Jews were free to desert the Jewish community and become totally assimilated. In ancient Alexandria, Tiberius Alexander, the nephew of the Jewish philosopher, Philo, adopted paganism and rose to become the Roman governor of Palestine, later assisting the Roman general, Vespasian, in the final siege of Jerusalem and the burning of the Second Temple. In

medieval Spain, to cite one instance out of many, Paul de Santa Maria of Burgos (1352–1435) had been a learned and scrupulous adherent of Judaism. Possessing wealth and fired by ambition, he converted to Christianity, took a degree in theology, and became the most persistent and virulent enemy of his former faith in Spain. Examples of defections from Judaism in the German culture-sphere before Hitler have been painstakingly assembled by Theodore Lessing in his work *Juedischer Selbst-hass* (*Jewish Self-Hate*). His study can be supplemented only too easily today with more recent examples.

Nevertheless, the majority of Jews in these three Jewish communities remained loyal to them. By and large, they succeeded in fashioning a workable accommodation between Judaism and the general culture, to both of which they gave their allegiance. Alexandrian Jewry revered and studied the Bible, but they read it in Greek. They produced an extensive and impressive literature in Greek expounding and defending Judaism. The Jewish poet, Ezekiel, following the model of the Greek classical dramatists, wrote a play called *The Exodus*. Above all, the philosopher, Philo, created an elaborate philosophic system designed to harmonize the faith and ethics of Judaism with the ideas of Greek thought.

In medieval Spain, where our records are fuller, the evidence is even more extensive. The flowering of Jewish talent and genius in "The Golden Age" is extraordinary. Poets of the first magnitude created a renaissance in Hebrew literature; their meter patterns and rhetoric, as well as many of their themes, were borrowed from their Arab colleagues. Great Jewish thinkers who sought to interpret Judaism in terms acceptable to intelligent men in their generation wrote in Arabic. Both in Moslem and in Christian Spain, Jews played significant roles in the development of the arts and sciences, as well as in the fields of government, public affairs, commerce and industry.

In modern Germany, the Jewish contribution was so extensive in all areas of the national life that it served as the basis of Hitler's lie that the Jews were poisoning the wells of German culture. Documentation is superfluous.

If the three basic elements of Jewish existence in an open society have existed in the past, how can America be regarded as a unique experience in Jewish life? There is one fundamental difference. Ancient Alexandria, medieval Spain and modern Germany were open societies, but they were not free. Jews lived under the perpetual shadow of political disenfranchisement and physical attack, and the threats, never at rest, materialized time and again. Throughout the life of these communities, Jews were the object of persistent hostility on every level, savage and relentless.

In Alexandria, intellectual anti-Semitism was cultivated by writers like Manetho. Politicians made consistent efforts to strip Jews of their legal rights to the citizenship that had been conferred upon them centuries before. In addition, time and again riots and massacres occurred.

In Spain, the Jewish community had to face the outbreak of religious fanaticism among both Moslems and Christians, which, all too often, led to massacre and pillage. The massive pogroms of 1391 were a tragic prelude to the great catastrophe of the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal a century later.

In the German States, anti-Jewish riots and repressive legislation followed the defeat of Napoleon in 1812, the suppression of the revolutions of 1848 and throughout the nineteenth century. There never was a time when anti-Semitism was not endemic in Germany. It existed in the army, in the universities, and in many sectors of the national life. Nor was it limited to the genteel forms of social discrimination. In 1881, a half-century before Hitler, the court preacher, Stöcker, organized the Christian Socialist Working Men's Union, which demanded the disenfranchisement of the Jews. Stöcker's agitation led to the burning of a synagogue and to riots in Austria and Hungary as well, laying the groundwork for the infamous Russian pogroms of the same period. France itself, the herald of "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality," was the seed-bed for the infamous Damascus Affair of 1840, engineered by the French Consul, Ratti-Menton. The climax was reached a half century later in the Dreyfus Case. Italy had a small Jewish community, but anti-Semitism was not a ghost of the past; it was a spectre in the present, as Jews learned to their distress in the Montara Case of 1857.

Herein lies the uniqueness of the American Jewish community. There have never been anti-Jewish riots and mass attacks on Jewish lives and property in the United States. American Jewry and America have been spared the plague of organized anti-Semitism, which elsewhere was often supported, when not fomented, by the highest levels of government. To be sure, there have been demagogues, of whom the unlamented Father Charles E. Coughlin is the best known, who preached anti-Semitism to millions, but even his impact was transitory. His later successors, some of whom unfurled the banner of "Christianity" to justify their Jew-hatred, have been able to attract only a small lunatic fringe of supporters.

Should economic misery and social discontent increase, undoubtedly the attempt to fan the fires of prejudice will be made again and again. Jews who have historically been the scapegoat for the miseries of society are still ideally suited for such a role.

Four decades ago, the late Chaim Arlosoroff pointed out that the great basic industries in America—coal, steel, railroads, banking—were largely *judenrein*. In the intervening years the situation has changed a little, though the rosters of directors of the giant banks and corporations today still have almost no Jewish names. But the concentration of Jews in the field of retail merchandising and their roles in education, culture, entertainment, and the free professions, make them highly visible and, therefore, vulnerable to anti-Semitic propaganda.

Nevertheless, America has gone through two World Wars and the Korean conflict, as well as the traumatic debacle of Viet Nam, without experiencing a significant upsurge of anti-Semitism. The major depression which began in 1929, and a succession of smaller depressions and recessions since, have worked substantial hardship on large segments of the American people, but they have not fallen prey to anti-Semitic demagoguery.

The last few years have revealed the spectacle of pirates and pygmies enthroned everywhere in the seats of the mighty. The oil shortages and the "rip-off" that followed have aroused justifiable resentment among the American public. It is a tribute to their essential good sense and decency that the efforts of some agitators to pin the problem on the State of Israel have thus far fallen on deaf ears. The exposure of the shameful scandal of the nursing home industry in the East, in which professing Jews were centrally involved, has also failed to produce a backlash of anti-Jewish sentiment.

As for the close relationship of identification by American Jewry with Israel, most American Jews and non-Jews alike may not have worked out a completely satisfactory theory, but they are able to understand it and accept the fact. The reality, if not the rationale, had been articulated two millennia earlier by Philo, in the first century, when he declared that Alexandrian Jewry "loved Jerusalem as their motherland and Alexandria as their fatherland." The metaphor has significant implications. When a father and a mother begin to quarrel, the child may be faced with the tragic necessity of choosing between one or the other. But, under normal and happier circumstances, the affection for one goes hand in hand with love for the other and reinforces it. This is eminently true of the attitude of American Jewry.

What the future holds one cannot say, but if the record of the first two hundred years of American independence is any clue, *America is different*. American Jewry is justified in feeling itself part of the warp and woof of American society as it continues to participate actively and creatively in every facet of American life. Simultaneously, Jews are free to maintain their concerns for the building of a voluntary Jewish community and the deepening of Jewish self-awareness because they live in a society which is not only open but free. Except for fringe groups on the extreme left and the extreme right, most American Jews have set for themselves the goal of *integration without absorption, acculturation without assimilation*.

To achieve their objectives, American Jews are seeking to find an accommodation between their Jewishness and their American loyalty, and the patterns are legion. That there is no single royal road to this goal was brought home to me through a minor incident a few years ago. I was visiting a summer camp for boys conducted by Agudat Yisrael, then at the extreme right of the Orthodox Jewish spectrum. Since every one at the camp was male, the costume worn by the campers was minimal—a pair of

shorts, an *arba kanfot* containing the *zizit*, and, of course, a *yarmulka*. At the time I was there, the youngsters were playing baseball. The boy at bat hit a long grounder between first and second base and began running toward first. As he ran, the wind lifted his *yarmulka* and carried it back a few yards. He stopped, reversed, retrieved the *yarmulka*, put it on his head, resumed his running, and was safe on base. Here was a genuine pattern of adjustment between Judaism and Americanism!

The adjustment may take the form of the Hasidic community of New Square near Spring Valley, New York, which is as authentic in its way as are the Amish of Pennsylvania. It is as varied as each individual Jew, whether he be a factory operator in New York, an industrialist in Chicago, an oil producer in Texas, or an entertainer in Hollywood. Total and definitive "solutions" are, in the very nature of the problem, not to be expected. But Jews will continue to wrestle with the problem and, in the process, guarantee the survival of Jews and Judaism. Signs are multiplying that increasingly they will explore the nature of their tradition in sincerity and depth, thus finding new resources to contribute to American life as a whole.

To mark the Bicentennial, this issue of JUDAISM contains a survey, though far from complete, of the principal areas of action and interaction of American Jewry and American society. The role of the Jew in government and politics, in commerce and industry, in the arts and sciences, and the impact of America on Jewish religion and culture demonstrate that the past two hundred years have been an experiment in mutuality between America and American Jewry. As in any basically happy relationship, both parties have been the gainers.

The Jew on the College Campus

ALFRED JOSPE

ALTHOUGH MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN RECENT years about college students in general and about Jewish students in particular, it is a hazardous business to attempt to analyze the impact which the American college experience had, and still has, on their attitudes and self-image. Despite the growth of pertinent research, our knowledge of how Jewish students felt and feel about being Jewish and how they define their Jewishness and how they relate to it, is still fragmentary and too limited to permit valid generalizations.

But generalizations about students are risky for other, more important reasons. The Jewish college population, like students in general, has never spoken in a single voice. Students differ enormously—in their backgrounds, interests, and capacities, in their social concerns, their political views, their outlook upon life, their attitudes towards authority, politics, Judaism, Israel, the synagogue, sex—in everything that may matter to them most or least. It is a popular misconception to assume that Jewish students basically are, or think, alike, confront the same problems, or respond to them in a similar manner. No generalization can capture the multitude of their often contradictory views.

Nor can generalizations adequately reflect the rapid and often radical changes in student values and attitudes which occur from one student generation to the next and frequently almost from year to year. The focus of student concern is in constant flux, often, though not exclusively, in direct response to changing social issues and conditions. What is vital to one student generation may pose no challenge to the next, and yesterday's moral or social "absolutes" frequently turn out to be today's irrelevancies.

Moreover, it is difficult to determine to what extent their views may carry over into adult life. Students are generally antinomian—restless, cynical, questioning the values of preceding generations, challenging authority. But, whatever opinion research may discover about their views while they are in college, it does not necessarily presage the course of action that they will actually follow later. A Hillel study of Jewish students at an Ivy League university showed that even though many of them had few, if any, *intellectual* reservations about intermarriage and approved of it in principle, almost all of them reacted negatively to the notion that their children might be raised as Christians. The conclusion is possible that their endorsement of intermarriage was largely verbal and detached and did not reveal the actual course of action that they might follow in case of a personal decision. Students usually rearrange their attitudinal universe

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when, after graduation, the demands of professional and family life begin to lay claim upon them.

These reservations must be kept in mind in any attempt to assess the impact of their college experience upon students. Nevertheless, it is possible to isolate and describe certain dominant trends and factors which had and, in part, still have, a strong influence on Jewish student attitudes. Neither the observations nor the data are necessarily new, but their recapitulation may provide an overview of all essential facets.

I

The single most important fact about the Jewish student population is what has been called the "education explosion"—the extraordinary growth in Jewish college enrollment during the past five or six decades and especially since World War II. A product of the vertical mobility of the Jewish population, of its rapid rise into the middle and upper middle class, this growth has been so rapid that, in Marshall Sklare's words, "the Jews have become one of the best educated segments of the American population in the course of six decades."¹

The extent and rapidity of this growth become visible if one looks at Jewish enrollment figures in earlier decades. While Harvard, according to President Charles W. Eliot, had no Jewish students until about 1887 and even after that date only a handful—about 60 among 2,200 undergraduates in 1907—there are about 3,500 Jews among the 15,000 students at Harvard today. Jewish enrollment, while initially growing only very slowly, increased sufficiently at the beginning of the century, especially in New York City and other centers of Jewish settlement, to permit the formation of the first Jewish fraternity (ZBT) in New York City in 1898, followed by the first student Zionist society in 1902 (also in New York City), a university Jewish literary society in Minnesota in 1903, and the first Menorah Society at Harvard in 1906. The first, though inadequate, attempt to determine the number of Jewish college students showed about 7,300 in 1915. However, from 1927 on, when there were still less than 25,000 Jews at American institutions of higher learning, their number rose to 105,000 in 1935, to nearly 250,000 in 1955, and now approximates 400,000, representing probably at least 80%, and perhaps as many as 85%, of the total Jewish college age population, compared with less than 50% in the general population. Four out of every five young Jews are now in college at any given time.

The rise in enrollment has been accompanied by a substantial shift in the geographic distribution of Jewish students. As late as 1935, 53% of all Jewish students in the United States were still in institutions located in New York City. Recent estimates indicate that their number may have dropped to hardly more than 20%; some estimates are even lower. Sev-

1. Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York, 1971), p. 51.

eral factors seem to account for this trend: the proportional increase of non-Jews, especially of members of minority groups entering colleges under the "open admissions" policy; the rise of the Jewish population to middle-class rank, enabling more parents to give their children a college education outside of the (formerly) tuition-free New York City system; the steady population migration to the South and West; the liberalization of admissions policies in privately controlled liberal arts colleges (many of which are now in search of more students to counteract the inflationary pressures); and the steady movement, at times amounting to flight, of the Jewish population from the inner city to the suburbs.

The education explosion, paradoxically, obscures the fact that Jewish students did not always find it easy to secure admission to the colleges and professional schools of their choice. The use of quotas, though rarely admitted, was wide-spread, usually reflecting the social prejudices and the desire for social homogeneity on the part of the university community, its alumni and its supporters. In 1922, Harvard undergraduates supported and justified the continued existence of a 10% quota for Jews by asserting that "Jews do not mix . . . [and] destroy the unity of the college." In 1945, the president of Dartmouth College justified a quota for Jewish students by emphasizing that "Dartmouth is a Christian college founded for the christianization of its students." And, as late as 1949, a study of the American Council on Education showed that the average Jewish applicant for college admission had considerably less chance of being accepted than did a Catholic or Protestant of comparable scholarly achievement. In the same year, application forms of 518 colleges and universities and of 88 schools of medicine and dentistry were still found to contain at least one, and usually several, potentially discriminatory questions. Restrictive admissions and social practices at universities began to yield to increasing public criticism and pressure only after World War II.

II

Jewish students reacted to these experiences with deep resentment, not against the prejudices, but against the fact of their Jewishness. They looked at themselves through gentile eyes. Being Jewish meant being strange. It meant rejection of one's application for membership in fraternities or for admission to medical or law school. It meant a label that, in Horace Kallen's words, seemed to "impose a gratuitous penalty upon anyone called a Jew"² and, thus, constituted a handicap in one's efforts to gain an American identity and to achieve ascendancy into the coveted strata of economic opportunity and social advancement—and all this for the sake of a tradition which students, especially in the 1930s, considered irrelevant to a generation that had "gone through and was still affected by the impact of economic dislocation, that had seen the rise of new systems

2. Horace M. Kallen, "The Menorah Idea," *The Menorah Journal* (Autumn-Winter 1962): 9ff.

promising a social reconstruction on radically new terms," that considered particularistic and ethnic loyalties atavistic, religion archaic, and Jewish allegiance a betrayal of the universalistic dream, a divisive force in the way of a united mankind.

Many of the children of this generation of the '30s seem to have followed in their parents' footsteps as proponents of a secularized messianism which resurfaced in the student activism of the mid-'60s. While student activists or radicals generally constituted only a small, though highly vocal, visible, and well publicized minority, the number of Jews among them seems to have been disproportionately large. Nathan Glazer estimates that probably one-third or even more of the committed, identifiable radicals on the most activist campuses were Jewish. Prominent among the factors which may have accounted for this trend is the "red diaper hypothesis"—many members of the past few student generations were the children of the young liberals and radicals of the '30s and were decisively influenced by their family background, with its emphasis on democratic interpersonal relations, a high degree of permissiveness, and a stress on values besides, or other than, achievement. Many young Jewish radicals seemingly did not so much reject their parents outright as they were bitterly critical of their failure to carry out their liberal principles effectively.³

Others—the large majority of those not belonging to the intellectual or socially sensitive avant garde—considered Judaism neither a problem nor a challenge. They did not convert or hide their Jewishness for the sake of social or professional advancement. They were indifferent—Judaism simply did not matter. It was an unavoidable yet irrelevant condition of their lives, a concession to family loyalty, a complex of consumption habits, but not a source of compelling personal or social values. The context of their social location, it was unrelated to ethnic, cultural, or religious loyalties.

Indifference and the tendency toward dissociation were strongly encouraged by a psychological factor which manifests itself especially in the academic milieu: the often fierce desire for independence from authority that has traditionally characterized college students. Harold Webster's phrase, "rebellious independence," describes the general personality pattern underlying the significant and often rapid value shifts and personality changes that occur when a young person enters college and, away from home, is for the first time able to experience freedom from restraint to encounter new ideas and to try them on for size, to break away from what most adolescents consider the strangulating ties of home, school, synagogue or church.

Moreover, the campus milieu, despite its discriminatory practices, provided numerous opportunities for the multiplication of human con-

3. Nathan Glazer, "The Jewish Role in Student Activism," *Youth in Turmoil* (New York, 1969), p. 101.

tacts as increasingly large numbers of young people of different faiths and backgrounds were thrown together more intimately and intensively than at any other time of their lives. They met in classes and extra-curricular activities, ate, played, studied, and often lived together in the same dormitories. As their opportunities for social intercourse increased, the barriers between Jews and non-Jews became increasingly meaningless, and many young Jews began to question the values of their parents' world and, especially, their old-world "bias" against interdating and intermarriage.

This break-away excursion was accelerated by the college atmosphere in still other ways. It was accelerated by the fact that the American university, until recently, was, for all practical purposes, *judenrein* in its failure to offer Jewish studies, and that absence could hardly be taken as anything but a negative judgment about the value and importance of such studies for the educated person. It was accelerated by the university's vigorous insistence upon intellectual freedom, by its suspicion and—rightful—rejection of teaching aiming at indoctrination, by its claim that scholarly objectivity and detachment were incompatible with particularistic loyalties, by its general mood of skepticism and its insistence that the working assumptions of science deny the validity of a religious position, by its emphasis on "sophistication" and a more "realistic," that is, a more critical attitude toward the institutional roles of family, state, and religion.

As the student was thrust into the college atmosphere he was likely to discover that the Judaism he had brought along did not seem to present a live intellectual option, that a religious position seemed to be irreconcilable with intellectual integrity, and that Judaism seemed irrelevant to his concerns as an individual and to the general condition of modern man.

The severity and pervasiveness of this tension became visible in virtually every survey of Jewish student attitudes during the past five or six decades. The crucial point is that many, if not most, Jewish students regarded religion as the core and central aspect of their definition of Judaism. Even those students who were far removed from Jewish life usually pointed out that their doubts about their Jewish identity stemmed from the fact that Judaism was a religion presupposing beliefs that they could not accept or affirm. Their very negation demonstrated their conviction that religion was the substance of Jewish identity. And it was precisely this conviction that was challenged by the university. The process usually began long before a student entered college, but it was encouraged and completed there. As a respondent to a study of student religious attitudes at Harvard put it: "After a few years at Harvard, faith becomes irrelevant." Or, in the words of a committed Jewish faculty member at an Eastern college,

As a teacher of freshmen, I know what a shock it is to their ideas and value systems to meet the Greek mind of Periclean Athens in juxtaposition with

the rabbinic mind of the religious school. The first impulse of the student is to jettison the rabbinic system.⁴

The college milieu encouraged the attrition of Jewish loyalty in still another way—through the absence, or invisibility, of Jewish faculty members who could serve as significant models of Jewish commitment. Two factors contributed to this vacuum. One was numerical. While Jewish student enrollment, despite restrictions, rose steadily after the first decades of the century, the number of Jewish faculty members remained small, partly because the supply of qualified American-trained potential Jewish college teachers was still limited, but, mainly, because restrictive policies were operative on the faculty level, too, and continued to bar many Jews from an academic career until burgeoning enrollments and the demands of enlarged or new institutions, mainly from the '40s on, created a growing need for additional staff. (At present, their number is estimated to exceed 30,000, representing about 10% of all college faculty members.)

But an attitudinal factor was also at work. Few Jewish faculty members were committed Jews or permitted themselves to be identified as Jews, some because they believed that academic success could best be achieved by taking cover from the snipings of academic anti-Semitism, many others because they found no credibility in theology and considered religious practices unworthy of attention by intelligent men. In the spirit of the academy, their philosophy was naturalistic, their method scientific, their faith was that the meaning of life is encompassed in the knowable universe, and their hope was for the redemption of mankind through man's rationality and his understanding of the consequences of his actions. In this universe of discourse, Judaism, as traditionally known and practiced, had no place. Students were quick to sense this fact. The example of those whom they respected, with whom they identified, and who could get along perfectly well without an open Jewish commitment, was convincing and contagious.

III

The evidence looks damning. It would be a mistake, however, to consider the college scene a Jewish wasteland. Strong impulses to counteract the dilution and dissolution of Jewish self-affirmation emerged early on the American campus, coming largely from the students themselves. The first Jewish campus group in North America, the ZBT fraternity (*Zion Bemishpat Tipadeh*, Isaiah 1:27) founded in 1898 to stimulate the study of Jewish history and culture by Jewish students, was soon followed by other student associations, especially Zionist student societies and literary clubs, that sprang up in several parts of the country. Most of them were absorbed by the Intercollegiate Menorah Association which was

4. Prof. Mel Bernstein, Dept. of English, Alfred University.

founded at Harvard in 1906 in order to attempt to "dispel the ignorance and raise the morale of Jewish students," nourish their interest in Jewish studies, demonstrate the existence of this interest to the college administration and, thus, ultimately win "its rightful place for the field of Jewish history and culture in the university."⁵ Independent of the Menorah Association, which grew to fifty chapters in 1930 but declined from then on and was finally dissolved in 1962, Zionist student groups functioned on several campuses, heralding the beginning of a proliferation of student groups and student service agencies that included denominationally-oriented or sponsored campus organizations, Zionist student associations, independent student activity programs with professional staff, and the fully professional B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations. Since the late '60s there have been a host of smaller campus groups, frequently formed in response to the rejection of Jewish student activists by the black movement, their disappointment with the anti-Israel stance of the New Left, their sensitivity to the actual or suspected overtones of hostility among the proponents of the "new ethnicity," and a growing self-awareness and self-assertion nurtured by the impact of the Six-Day and Yom Kippur wars, which turned many of them to the concerns of the Jewish community and people as the area for acting out their moral and social convictions.

IV

The case must, of course, not be overstated. Indifference and apathy are still rampant. Large numbers of young Jews still do not care, or negate the middle-class values of the Jewish community as socially unacceptable, they reject religion, the community's major mode of self-definition, as intellectually offensive, or they rebel against the general social and political order as morally obnoxious. Nevertheless, today's students are rarely in flight. There still are escapist, but most are not. They have a sense of security. Being Jewish has become not only an acceptable identity but an often vibrant affirmation on campus. As a result, the forms and directions of Jewish life on campus have changed drastically.

One change is the substantial increase of Jewish visibility in extra-curricular and curricular activities in recent years. Jewish studies have become an integral part of the curriculum in a still growing number of institutions, frequently as a direct result of student initiative and pressures, encouraged and aided by Jewish faculty members and often supported by communal resources.

Jewish faculty members, too, have become increasingly visible. While committed professors who identify publicly may still be a minority, their number has grown rapidly. They may continue to question fundamental

5. H. Hurwitz and I. Leo Scharfstein, *The Menorah Movement* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1914), p. 29.

assumptions of the Jewish tradition or chafe under the superficiality of much that is going on in the Jewish community. Yet they came forward in an unprecedented display of solidarity in 1967 and once again in 1973, and they continue to be vigorously involved. They sponsor and join mass actions and demonstrations on behalf of Israel, peace in the Middle East, and Soviet Jewry, support and sometimes spearhead efforts to introduce curricular Jewish studies, organize faculty study groups for themselves, and involve themselves to a previously unknown degree in Jewish campus life and community affairs. By demonstrating that academic intelligence and Jewish commitment are not incompatible, their new visibility has created new models of Jewish legitimacy for Jewish students.

Above all, there have been vast changes in the attitudes of the students themselves. I suspect that in many cases the process may actually have been merely the activation, the rising to the surface, of a deep residue of loyalty which was dormant but has always existed. The students' basic ties to Jewishness often appear and, indeed, are superficial, sentimental, uninformed, sometimes vulgar. Yet there exists a deep-seated tenacity of Jewish belongingness that emerges under pressure on the campus just as it does in the community and, did, in and since 1967. The social upheavals and political convulsions of the past decade have turned many students around to a new confrontation with the fact and the implications of their Jewishness.

As a result, several striking changes have occurred in their attitude towards their Jewishness. One is the often complete reversal of the way young Jews are looking at themselves as Americans and Jews. The Gentile is no longer the dominant model he had been for earlier student generations, when concealment was one of the avenues of escape from the penalties of being Jewish. Nor has their faith in the promise of America as a model for the rest of the world remained unaffected by the events of the recent past. What Jewish students, together with their counterparts in the general student population, are questioning is the meaning of their American identity, the moral validity of the vision of earlier generations of what this country was, or at least might become—the dream, not of the America of Harding, the Watergate or Baltimore County, but of the America inscribed on every dollar bill representing *novus ordo seclorum*, “a new order for the ages.”

But this dream was shattered. It was shattered by Vietnam, by political assassinations, by urban violence. It was shattered by the moral climate emanating from Washington and the United Nations, by the emergence of race and ethnicity as political issues and their renaissance as social determinants. It was shattered by the discovery that affirmative action spawns affirmative discrimination, that people apparently were no longer to be judged by merit and achievement but by their membership in a biological, ethnic, or racial group. As their disenchantment with America's political posture and social policies grew, they were increas-

ingly thrown back upon themselves and the resources of their Jewishness in their search for intellectual and emotional anchorage.

There were other reasons. But regardless of whether students have been turning to Jewish life because they want to withdraw from the frustrations of American society, or are motivated by a self-awareness nurtured by Israel's battle for survival or their own experiences in Israel, or are driven by hunger for spiritual roots, they have changed the panorama of Jewish life on campus. They no longer shy away from ethnic identification, the great taboo of earlier generations. They want to be seen and heard. They publish student newspapers and magazines, a few of them first-rate. They push for the introduction of accredited programs of Jewish studies. They are instrumental in setting up "Free Jewish Universities" for the study of Jewish sources and themes that will enable them to come to grips with their spiritual and moral questions. They ask for, and flock to, sources and study groups on the Holocaust, in Hebrew, Yiddish language and literature, in Jewish religious and philosophical thought, in the sources of Jewish tradition. They organize "Hebrew Houses," *havurot*, *batim*, and other settings for cooperative Jewish living where they attempt to live in accordance with what they hope to develop as a Jewish lifestyle. They initiate militant campus action on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jewry and have long conducted effective annual fundraising drives for overseas needs and selected domestic causes. The upsurge of Jewish self-awareness and self-assertion on the campus is of an intensity and strength which have been unknown on the American campus and which contradict the prophecies of doom frequently heard during the past decade.

Their search for roots and for ways of being meaningfully Jewish points to a second area in which the attitudes of Jewish students have been changing significantly. The end of student activism a few years ago has been accompanied by a distinct growth of religious interest among students, involving a frequently very intense quest for religious self-expression. Recent reports⁶ indicate a high level of student participation in worship at colleges and universities. This trend, too, represents a radical change from the attitudes of earlier student generations. Nearly every study in the '20s or '30s, as Nathan Glazer has pointed out,⁷ showed that Jewish students "had moved much farther from any religious position than the Catholic or Protestant students. More were atheist, more agnostic, fewer accepted any traditional religious formulations."

Traditional religious formulations have become widely accepted on campus today. The trend is partly due to the increase in the number of students of a strictly traditional background or conviction who can be found at institutions outside of New York City and other metropolitan areas (as evidenced, for instance, by the large number of students who

6. *Campus* (A Hillel Newsletter), (Washington, D.C.), Spring 1976.

7. Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago, 1957), p. 85.

require kosher meal arrangements, organize kosher co-ops, or establish *batim* in order to live in accordance with the mandates of *halakhah*). A trend of similar intensity can also be observed among students of entirely different backgrounds. They are in search of new modes of religious experience and expression. They want to move away from what they feel is the empty conventionalism by which their parents seek to satisfy their affiliative needs. They want to go deeper and discover, or rediscover, Jewish tradition and an authentic religious experience—albeit frequently on their own highly individualistic terms. Thus, they will experiment with the *matbea' hatefillah* and the *mizvot*, selecting those prayers and observances which “speak” to them. Others will discard most of the conventional forms and symbols of Jewish worship. They will experiment with multimedia approaches, utilize readings from contemporary Israeli or general literature, use prayers or personal statements written by members of the group, withdraw into lengthy periods of silent meditation followed by spontaneously started songs and discussion. At the same time, there may be a heightened emphasis on symbolism and unconventional liturgical elements—candles, liturgical dances, sitting in circles on the floor, touching, hand-holding, and other forms of physical contact.⁸

These experiments reflect a hunger for transcendence and religious experience that the mainstream theologies and institutions of the Jewish community seem rarely able to satisfy. But they frequently also reflect a rejection of “the myth of rationalism”—the exaggerated respect which, they feel, is being paid to the role and competence of reason as the only road to truth. They may not know Buber’s or Rosenzweig’s writings (though many do, and courses on both thinkers are usually well attended), but would agree with them that a purely rational approach is inadequate to comprehend the multifaceted fullness of reality. For this reason they continue to turn to the study of Eastern religions, but, especially, also of Jewish mysticism, in their search for a dimension of reality beyond the world of “plastics,” and they create new worship patterns in order to satisfy their hunger for oneness with nature, to find more adequate ways for the expression of their sense of love, their emphasis on celebration, their groping for spiritual certainties, their search for the experience of the *mysterium tremendum*.

Though some of these developments and practices seem strange and may be disturbing, they must be taken seriously as evidence that large segments of the Jewish student population are in search of an experience of Jewishness which the community’s religious and educational institutions are rarely prepared to accommodate or equipped to redirect.

8. For a fuller description of the issues see “Tradition and Innovation in Worship,” *Bridges to a Holy Time, New Worship for the Sabbath and Minor Festivals*, edited by Alfred Jospe and Richard N. Levy (New York, 1973), pp. 1–29.

V

Social prediction is even more a perilous enterprise than is an analysis of the past in the absence of conclusive data. Nevertheless, the data, despite their limitations, permit several conclusions.

Jewish college enrollment seems to have reached its saturation point. When more than four out of every five Jews of college age actually are in college at any given time (although not all complete four years of college or go on to graduate school), the level of education cannot rise much higher.

As a result of the education explosion, an unprecedented proportion of the Jewish population will be college-educated, including professionals whose number is estimated to increase substantially in the next few decades.⁹ The young people who are in college today will constitute the leadership as well as the membership of the American Jewish community. They will be the producers as well as the consumers of Jewish life a quarter-century from now. They will set the standards and shape the quality of Jewish life in the years ahead. The question is to what extent they will be equipped for this task.

The influence of a college education plus experience admittedly are crucial factors in a young person's formative development. Nevertheless, the purposes and functions of the American university do not include a responsibility for the preservation and enhancement of Jewish life in America, notwithstanding the encouraging growth of academic Jewish studies. Their contribution to Jewish life at the university is vital—they assure the presence of the Jewish heritage in the market place of ideas. Yet Jewish students also have needs which university courses, by definition, are not equipped to meet if they are to be academically authentic. Students have moral and spiritual questions to which they seek answers. To meet these needs is, and will remain, the responsibility of the Jewish community and of the specialized agencies established for this purpose.

Thus, the extent to which informed and committed involvement of Jewish students in all aspects of Jewish life can be nurtured depends to a crucial degree on the priority which the Jewish community is willing and prepared to assign to this task.

9. Marshall Sklare, *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

The American University and Jewish Learning

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

BOSTON WAS FOUNDED IN 1628. HARVARD COLLEGE was established eight years later. Over the years, Christian sects, the several states, and various cities organized America's far-reaching network of colleges and universities. With the lone and late exception of Brandeis (1948) the American Jewish community made no move to share in this work. Why?

The immigrant Jewish community was not prejudiced against the university as an institution. Though the majority had little, if any, experience with secular education, most were eager for their sons and daughters to attend and graduate; and go and graduate they did, in significant numbers. To use a rabbinic idiom, the children of the immigrants went to college to provide themselves a spade with which to dig into the promising American lode. Generally, they and their parents were so eager to begin prospecting that the children asked no questions about the *tref* in the traditional academic diet and the parents silenced their fears about assimilation and apostasy. In this respect, Jews differed significantly from Roman Catholic immigrants. Catholics were generally willing to support the plans of the Jesuits or of their bishops to establish colleges where their children could be educated in a familiar and supportive atmosphere, even though remaining among their own might hold their sons back from the main chance.

It was also a matter of tradition. Harvard had been founded so that a native generation of Puritan ministers would not lack the learning that their predecessors had acquired at Cambridge or Oxford. Before coming to America, both the Protestant and Catholic communities had controlled sectarian universities which combined professional and classical materials in their curriculum. In Europe there had been no Jewish Cambridge, only *yeshivot*; and the *yeshivah*, whatever its merits, offered no courses in the major elements of western culture.

The drive among first-generation Jews for a college degree bordered on the frenetic and clearly exceeded the urgency of other immigrant groups. The conventional explanation has it that Jews swarmed to the universities because Judaism had sanctified learning and Jewish life had tied status to learning. But the surge began before "my son, the professor" was an accepted status symbol. The thirst for a university degree among American Jews seems to derive rather more from the "what makes Sammy run" syndrome, the drive for status and success.

It was the rare youth, usually a pre-rabbinic student, who enrolled in one of the courses in Hebrew or Old Testament offered by departments

of religion or of Semitic studies. To be sure, these courses had an air of Protestant piety about them; most had been organized for the pre-professional training of future ministers or to satisfy theories of what every intelligent Christian should know. But the alien atmosphere of the classroom was not the major reason why Jews did not enroll. Why should they? One went to *heder* for "Jewish learning." Jews were at college, not to learn Torah, but to learn to make America work for them.

The university was not seen by faculty or students, Jews or non-Jews, as an appropriate setting for Jewish Studies. There was no tradition of formal Jewish Studies within the received curriculum which, for the most part, accepted the Christian piety that Jewish creativity had ceased when Jews had rejected the new covenant. Enlightenment ideas about the primacy of reason were popular in most faculties and intellectuals found little reason to interest themselves in the study of another positivist tradition. The Enlightenment emphasis on the universal in human experience encouraged the view that the university community was committed to a set of common values that were distinct from, and superior to, what even many Jewish professors patronized as "the parochial interests of Jewish life."

Prejudice was not absent from the academic community during the early decades of the century, but, formally at least, it was decried. Those Jews who went to college with an education, rather than a vocation, in mind, generally were prepared to accept the university's claim that here was a new world from which parochial divisions had been uprooted. Cultural pluralism was an idea whose time had not yet come. Few paused to consider the reality of the Protestant chapel whose spire rose above the campus; to most Jews who hoped to become academicians, the university represented the community of reason, what the world would soon be. College was the New Jerusalem from which a new Torah of universalist and humanist teaching would go forth and enlighten the world. Most who immigrated to this New Jerusalem became enthusiastic citizens, academicians of Jewish descent who consciously and deliberately put as much distance as they could between themselves and the Jewish community. The Jewish undergraduate, once his degree was in hand, had to go back to a world where many opportunities and the executive suite remained locked to him. He quickly learned that the New Jerusalem, if it existed at all, was limited to the halls of ivy. Jewish academicians, however, stayed in their messianic society, and so seductive was its promise that a tremendous wrench was required to force them to recognize that their colleagues could accept all of the Enlightenment assumptions and still regale each other with canards about Jews or Judaism and deny appointment to a Jew. At the root of the being of an Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. and a Franz Boaz was the soul of one who had made *aliyah*, who had consciously freed himself from all that smacked of *galut*, of all that was parochial, and who was determined never to be a *yored*.

Until World War II, the American university did not offer Jewish learning as Jewish learning, nor did students ask the university for such instruction. To provide itself with an educated leadership, the Jewish community established a number of limited-purpose institutions, seminaries and teachers colleges where educators and rabbis could be trained. The seminaries were adaptations of the European *yeshivot* and their graduates provided recognized and required services to the community. The seminaries developed large faculties and extensive libraries and, until quite recently, remained the only American locations where students could find competent mentors in most areas of Jewish learning. Much was accomplished, but there were problems. Women were, by tradition, excluded from seminary education. Teachers colleges for men and women came later and were never fully equal. Those who did not want to, or could not, take a confessional route were effectively excluded; and faculty were sometimes forced to toe a party line. Because America imposed upon the rabbi many roles besides that of scholar-halakhist, seminary training became increasingly vocational. Purely academic standards were sometimes lowered, even sacrificed, so that the rapidly growing community would have enough pulpit rabbis. A seminary graduate was not yet a full-fledged scholar, often not even a half-fledged one; a fact underscored throughout the early decades of this century by the continuing enrollment of future seminary faculty in German graduate schools.

To be sure, the seminaries graduated a number of men who became leading scholars, but seminary prestige was higher within the Jewish community than outside of it. America considered all denominational seminaries as an academic backwater and the "better" universities discounted their degrees. Publications by men of the stature of Louis Ginsberg and Jacob Mann were virtually unnoticed in the academic world. In a recent paper, Arnold Band quoted Gavin Langmuir, who said that, "In general, majority history as it relates to Jews has been marked by a lack of interest, when it has not also been marked by derogatory attitudes." University faculties simply were not interested in Jewish materials; and, even when there were shared concerns, researchers in Biblical and Hellenistic studies at schools like the Hebrew Union College found that to be noticed at all they had to seduce Protestant Bible scholars by offers of publication in their *Annual* or by invitations to lecture.

Christian interests had prompted the inclusion of Hebrew and Bible in the curriculum of the American college. The first Jews to teach Bible or Hebrew did so in what was, in effect, a seminary setting and some were apostates (e.g., Monis). Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a few departments of religion and oriental language evidenced interest in Jewish faculty, preferably those trained in the great German academic tradition, who could teach Biblical criticism without being cowed by pressures from denominational councils and who could broaden New Testament studies with rabbinic parallels. Nordheimer, Gottheil and

Jastrow were acceptable colleagues because they had been trained in *Wissenschaft* norms; trained, that is, to teach Judaism with critical dispassion and without active concern for the relationship of their studies to the identity problems of their students or the cultural reach of the Jewish people. As members of a university faculty, their subject might be particular, but their perspective would be universal.

The phenomenon which we call Jewish Studies, that is, conscious and critical interest in Jews, Jewish institutions and the Jewish tradition as a subject area, developed very slowly during the first half of this century as established faculties in the "better" universities became dissatisfied with the traditional boundaries of the received curriculum. Hellenistic Judaism and the Pharisees clearly had had an impact on the emerging Christian tradition; the Harvard of George Foote Moore needed a Harry Wolfson. Jews had played a significant role in nineteenth-century Europe; the Columbia History Department needed a Salo Baron. It did not hurt that Nathan Littauer and Nathan Miller were able to provide the wherewithal; but the impetus for the study of Jews and Judaism in a few distinguished eastern schools came from faculties, not from the development office, a fact of no small consequence, as the funding of Jewish Studies has required, and continues to require, a large and continuing outlay of university cash for men and books. I have seen estimates which suggest that universities have invested in Jewish study programs between twenty and twenty-five dollars of their own funds for every dollar contributed from within the Jewish community.

At mid-century, America's emergence as a world power catalysed a revolution on the American campus. The insularity of the earlier curriculum was no longer seriously defended. A wide range of area studies developed to complement the western civilization praxis. Religion departments began to include Catholic, Eastern and Jewish Studies as well as the standard New Testament and Church History offerings. The monopoly of senior positions in Bible, long maintained by Protestant scholars, was broken. Semitic language departments began to list conversational Hebrew as well as Weingreen. Historians offered courses in the History of the Jews as well as the History of Southeast Asia. Near Eastern studies began to include seminars on Zionism and on the social institutions of Israel. "Jewish Studies" had come into being; but it was rarely, and never easily, defined. To some it meant the classic disciplines of Tanakh and Rabbinics. Others were interested in Yiddish literature, *kahal* structures, Ladino, the demography of the existing community, etc. The term was as broad as the historic Jewish experience, and definition was pleasantly complicated by the interest of Jewish scholars from many specialties. Moved by emotions that they only partially acknowledged, particularly deriving from the Holocaust and 1948, emotions which challenged the facile universalism of an earlier period, these scholars began to find a Jewish component in their studies of cuneiform tablets or Persian

literature or the Gregorian chant or Marxist dialectics. A considerable literature has appeared which seeks to distinguish "Judaica," "Jewish learning," "Hebrew studies," "Hebraica" and "study of Torah" so that institutions could understand the parameters of Jewish Studies.

At the same time, a dramatic shift took place below-stairs. The post-war generation of Jewish undergraduates began to ask for Jewish learning as part of their general education. They no longer looked to college to provide them with a passport into American opportunity; they belonged. What they wanted was "an education," and that meant exploring themselves and their roots as well as their world. Other students had more practical motivations (preparation in Hebrew for a junior year program in Israel, content preparation for a social work career in a Jewish institutional setting). Still others were caught up in the ethnicity craze or wanted a Jewish parallel to black studies. The combined surge of faculty and student interest resulted in a remarkable two decades of growth for Jewish learning in America's universities.

Before World War II, less than a dozen scholars taught Judaica on a full-time basis in our universities and perhaps an equal number of Jews taught Hebrew. Today, over 300 colleges offer one or more credit courses in Jewish Studies, nearly 250 faculty teach full time in the field, and another 300 to 400 persons teach or work in this area on a part-time basis. I have seen estimates which suggest that as many as 50,000 undergraduates took a course in Jewish Studies during the 1973-4 academic year. More accurate figures will be available when a survey sponsored by the Association for Jewish Studies has been completed. The studies of the National Foundation For Jewish Culture suggest that as many as 300 young scholars are preparing for the Ph.D. degree in specialties which relate, in some significant way, to Jewish Studies.

The colleges which now offer one or more courses in Jewish Studies began to do so for varying reasons and continue to do so with varying emphases. Sometimes a religion department wanted to be ecumenical. Particularly after the Six Day War, some schools found it prudent to respond to Jewish student pressure for a Hebrew House or for a course on the Holocaust. In many cases, there was no clear academic rationale for the offerings. It was the case of an idea whose time had come and of a program that was "up for grabs" by anyone interested in picking up the ball. In at least one instance, to my knowledge, a Jewish Studies program emerged out of a Jew in the English Department whose interest was radical literature, a Jew in anthropology whose interest was in the *shtetl*, and a Jew in history who was a specialist in labor organizations.

Jewish Studies programs have grown from above and below, out of faculty interest in Jewish data and undergraduate interest in Jewish values. When you add to these divergent motivations the wide diversity of interest and specialization possible in a field called Jewish Studies, it is no wonder that vice presidents for academic affairs have had a difficult time

deciding where a Chair of Jewish Studies should be placed and what capacities the incumbent should possess. The common practice has been to center scholars in Jewish learning in a Semitic language department, in Near Eastern studies or in Religion, with the promise that a cross-departmental offering would be developed.

Jewish Studies at the undergraduate level has not escaped, and probably can never fully escape, confessional involvement. In some measure, this is due to American educational theory which emphasizes undergraduate education as a means of personal growth as well as of mastery of an academic discipline. Some young Jews seek the Confirmation class that they did not attend or paid little attention to when they were fifteen. Some undergraduates look upon a professor of Jewish Studies as their resident rabbi, a role for which he may be neither eager nor fit. For several decades, the search for a meaningful faith or philosophy has motivated many undergraduates, Jew and non-Jew, to enroll in courses in religion.

The interests of students in studying religion often run counter to the interests of scholars and teachers in the field . . . religious studies has recently achieved legitimacy in part by denying "relevance" . . . by avoiding "preaching," by distinguishing its aim from the functions that religious advisors and professional training serve. Yet, it is precisely at this time that the pressures have mounted for more attention to the needs and interests of students (James M. Gustafson).

In order to separate Jewish Studies from Hillel or chaplaincy programs, and to establish Jewish Studies as a creditable academic enterprise (the old disdain has not completely disappeared), Jewish Studies professionals have emphasized, and perhaps over-emphasized, the high wall of separation that should exist between the academic study of Judaism and the advocacy of Judaism: "It is not the duty of the professor of the history of Judaism or of Hebrew to interest himself in the state of the souls of his students, whether Jewish or gentile" (Neusner). The division is never that neat. Undergraduate tutoring inevitably involves counseling; totally dispassionate teaching is, itself, a confessional statement. Clearly, the classroom is not a place for narrow advocacy and, in the university classroom, data and literature must be approached critically and comparatively rather than as self-validating teachings.

The variety of materials which comprise Jewish learning suggest that any department which wants to offer more than a once-over-lightly survey must have a sizeable faculty: one must know the classic literature (Bible-Talmud-Midrash-medieval philosophy), another contemporary Jewish thought, still another the sociological and demographic components of modern Jewish life, and, since there is no scholarship without language competence, courses in Hebrew, Yiddish and, one would hope, Aramaic, should be available. No single scholar can teach all of the courses required for an undergraduate major, much less for a graduate degree. Intellectual honesty as well as the budget, particularly when you add to the cost of faculty the cost of maintaining extensive library holdings,

should limit graduate departments and even Jewish study majors to a few schools.

In many colleges a certain amount of makeshift is probably inescapable. If a school can hire only a single person, he will have to spend much of his time teaching basic surveys of Judaica and finding people who can be borrowed from elsewhere on the faculty—sociologists who can contribute a course on the *shtetl* or the *kibbutz*, classicists or philosophers who can offer a course in Alexandrian Jewish literature or medieval Jewish philosophy—or, from the community, rabbis and Hebraists from local Colleges of Jewish Studies who can relieve him of some of the burden of the basic courses. The use of local rabbis and teachers will continue to be a debated issue; some have denominational biases (*s'mikhah* does not a scholar make); and academic types are not immune to the usual disdain of the professional for the amateur. The desire fully to professionalize the field is understandable, but, except in certain well-endowed schools, realistically impossible. Not all rabbis or Hebraists are scholars, but some are, and the geographic spread of such persons has been invaluable during a period of rapid development.

The situation is dramatically different at a few universities where the faculty is deeper, the academic tradition older, and where Jewish Studies has emerged less in response to undergraduate soul-searching than out of the felt needs of the scholarly enterprise. These schools have a full catalogue of supportive courses in language, history, religion, the classics, Islamic studies and the Middle East, which have made it possible for well-conceived programs of undergraduate concentration and graduate studies to develop. In such schools, where the faculty often shares research interest in a broad range of topics—from the phenomenology of religion to patterns of cultural interaction—from the nature of religious leadership to the forms of mystical experience—a vigorous and significant scholarly exchange has developed.

The emergence of Jewish Studies within the university curriculum is too recent a development to allow confident predictions about its long-term significance or prospects. Much will depend on university budgets. Currently, because of budgetary constriction, administrations must select among their strengths as to what will be cut and what will remain. This would suggest a certain restriction in the number of colleges offering Jewish Studies as a major or as a graduate offering. At least for the next decade, there will be no dearth of scholars for the available positions and, at the same time, there will probably be greater need for the financial support of the Jewish community.

Though Jewish Studies is new to the American campus, the critical and analytic approach to Jewish learning has its roots in *Wissenschaft* and is an international enterprise. Wherever undertaken, it seeks to bind history into Jewish learning, to see the Jewish experience as a special case of the human experience rather than as unique, and to keep Jewish learning

free of either apologetics or confessional concerns. *Wissenschaft* studies were cool rather than hot; Judaism was viewed as an object to be studied rather than a living civilization to be savoured. Some in today's academy long for the determined dispassion of *Wissenschaft*, but today's scholars come out of a vigorous and culturally self-confident Jewish community and live in a world that no longer damns religious phenomena as crude superstition, and rather glories in cultural pluralism. Cool dispassion is not the way for most of this generation of participant observers and scholar activists.

The business of the university is to provide concepts which will help man to understand his world and the millions who move about in it. Critical understanding makes a scholar, not a Jew. Serious tensions will emerge between the Jewish community and the Jewish study field if the community identifies this work as a Jewish identity project and judges it accordingly. At the same time, if a majority of instructors insist that while their subject material is particular their perspective is wholly and only universal, they will then turn Jewish Studies from a creative undertaking in which undergraduates as well as advanced scholars can participate into an archival enterprise. Confessional advocacy does not belong in the classroom. The classroom can thrive only as a place of free inquiry and critical examination, but the scholar who scorns involvement in the life of the community assumes a measure of responsibility for the misuse of his scholarship by others.

Jewish Studies is no longer carried on in isolation. Methodologies and concept structures common in the university will necessarily be appropriated for, and by, Jewish Studies. The special American interest in sociology and social analysis already has provided a set of methodological and analytic tools which the Sklares and Elazars have applied with skill in their studies of the contemporary Jewish community and its institutions.

Most researchers now recognize the advantage of integrating Jewish data into their ongoing scholarly enterprise. Goitein's use of Genizah material to provide further understanding of the economics and the demography of the Mediterranean Basin during the Middle Ages is a magnificent case in point. In return, Jewish scholars have available to them all the research and conceptual tools developed in this century.

There is no doubt that this two-way process is well advanced, nor that a practical problem has emerged which is yet to be faced, much less surmounted. The age of Renaissance men is over. Each discipline, indeed, each sub-discipline, has its own language and set of tools and methodologies and no scholar can be expert in many. Yet, in most colleges, the Jewish Studies person will have to be something of a generalist. The Jewish experience is so long and its geography so scattered that a competent survey would require five or six professors; yet, usually, only one is available. The Jewish Studies field wrestles here with a problem not uncommon in the academic enterprise. Should the field organize itself for

the pursuit of knowledge and to permit research by scholars, or to provide insight and sensitivity to undergraduates? The answer is, of course, both/and; but it is not yet clear how the Jewish Studies field will adjust to this two-sided need.

One hopeful sign for the future is the creation of a corporation of men and women who share a common interest in Jewish learning, each with a speciality within the larger field. Ten years ago, when I convened the first meeting of the Academic Advisory Council of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the invited scholars were strangers to each other. The sociologists around the table had never met the historians and the men who taught in the seminaries did not know, except by reputation, those who taught in a secular setting. Over the past decade an intellectual community has emerged. The Association For Jewish Studies now provides a forum for professional interests and a focus for the Jewish Studies enterprise. A journal is in the offing. Slowly, but perceptibly, a sense of order and articulated purpose has emerged and standards are being set. In time, I suspect, Jewish Studies will be defined as that which the members of the Association do.

Seminary faculties have been encouraged by their colleagues in the universities to use the new methodologies. The old anhistorical way is still the only way in some *yeshivot* and in some schools. Biblical criticism is still a problem area; but no work of competence can long be denied if only because the traditionalists must refute "heretical ideas." There is already some movement of men between seminary and secular faculties, and more will certainly occur, with benefit to students and studies in both types of institutions.

The field of Jewish Studies has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to the critical understanding of the Jewish experience; but Jewish learning in this sense is not *Talmud-Torah*. Jewish Studies refines a perception of Torah which binds the dimension of time and the study of mankind into the received tradition. Whether such a Torah can inspire and bind men to it remains an open question, one which, in the final analysis, the field of Jewish Studies is not compelled to answer.

Jewish Religion in America: A Study in Mutuality

GILBERT S. ROSENTHAL

AT THE TIME OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, A mere two centuries ago, there were no more than 2,500 Jews in this New World. Today, we Jews number about six million. When George Washington was inaugurated as our first president he was greeted by the six extant congregations in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Newport, Savannah, and Richmond. Today, American Jewry boasts more than 3,000 synagogues. In 1776 there was not a single ordained rabbi on these shores; today, over 3,000 occupy pulpits and numerous others teach or work as administrators or organization executives. And, whereas the Revolutionary Jew sent his child to a totally inadequate Talmud Torah for a smattering of Jewish "learning," today there are at least 600,000 Jewish children in thousands of religious schools and in over three hundred Day Schools which train them in Hebrew, Bible, liturgy, history, ethics, and related subjects, as well as numerous students taking Judaica courses in many universities.

In short, the religious growth of American Jewry has been unquestionably phenomenal. It is the largest Jewry in the world, with more religious institutions, seminaries, synagogues, camps, and philanthropic groups than perhaps at any time in any one place. Ours is an inspiring, hopeful, buoying saga.

Jews, in their three-millennial history, have never lived in a vacuum. From our very inception as a people we have interacted with our neighbors; we have been influenced by, and exerted influences on, our environment. The ancient Mesopotamian culture shaped Judaism, as did the Graeco-Roman civilization and the Christian and Muslim societies. And we left our impact on them as well. Those who argue against the historical reality of such socio-religious intercourse simply fly in the face of history. Clearly, America was no different. American Jews interacted with their environment; American Jewish religion was hardly an inert entity.

As the dominant civilization always has the greater impact on the weaker one, so the American civilization has had a greater impact on Judaism than vice versa. In some ways, the impact of America on Jewry has been so powerful that American Jewish life is almost *sui generis* in world Jewry.

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Americans are a "religious" people; over 90% acknowledge a Deity. For most, the Deity is a rather amorphous being and their religion is a sort

of civic affair with little theological insight. But believe they do. So do American Jews. About 82% of heads of households identify with religion, although only a little more than half of that number actually belong to synagogues. Of those who identify with Judaism, 40.5% consider themselves Conservative, 30% Reform, and 11.4% Orthodox. A mere 4.1 percent describe themselves as Atheists or Agnostics.¹

Moreover, America is preeminently a pluralistic society and a heterogeneous mass. There are over 250 religious sects in this nation—a phenomenon unprecedented in any Jewish experience anywhere before in Europe, Asia, or Africa. This pluralism has made for a relatively wide range of tolerance of all types of “idiosyncracies,” from the Amish of Pennsylvania to the Hasidim of Crown Heights.² Despite this proliferation of sects, America seems to have reduced them all to three in what has been described as a “triple melting pot” of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Thus, it has come to pass that 6 million Jews are afforded virtual parity with 48 million Catholics and over 160 million Protestants in public ceremonies, legal institutions such as the chaplaincy, and in the national psyche.³ As national ethnicity has declined, religio-cultural ethnicity has emerged as valid and legitimate. Whereas there has been a recent upsurge of racial and national ethnicity among Blacks and Puerto Ricans, the parallel phenomenon among Jews has been primarily religio-cultural, although the State of Israel has elicited considerable nationalistic sentiments. In this American triple melting pot of ours, being a Jew in a religious sense is perfectly normal and natural in gentile eyes.⁴

Americans generally have eschewed extremism or dogmatism in politics and economics as well as in religion. They seem to prefer a middle-of-the-road approach to life, and from the days of our deist Founding Fathers, religious liberalism has been viewed sympathetically. Baptism has not been the key to public success and, except in academic life, Jews could rise to the top of the heap. Even in academics, the old Protestant antipathy to Jewish professors has disappeared of late. In Europe, a Jew had to accept baptism as the “ticket to European civilization,” as Heine observed. In America, however, he could make it as a believing Jew. From the birth of this nation, church and state were separated, there never was an established church, and secularism was rampant. This phenomenon explains the huge growth of secular organizations. It also explains why most Protestants are not church members and why at least 45% of Jews are similarly unaffiliated.

Moreover, America's secular society has spawned religious laxity among all groups. Despite the fact that most Americans believe in a

1. These are the results of the survey by Dr. Fred Massarik for the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

2. Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, 1972), pp. 4 ff.

3. Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), *passim*.

4. Nathan Glazer and Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. xxxiii ff.

Supreme Being, few take their beliefs very seriously. Piety among Catholics and Protestants has rarely been up to European standards and today only about 40% of adults attend church services weekly. This laxity has prevailed among Jews in even greater measure. As far back as 1748, Peter Kalm, a Swedish visitor to these shores, observed young Jews eating pork and violating other observances. At the time of the Revolution, Haym Solomon wrote to his family in Poland that Jewish life was "very weak" in America.⁵ Time and again, New York's Shearith Israel and Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel congregations warned their aberrant members that they would lose synagogue honors and even burial rights.⁶ Still, Jews continued to violate the Sabbath and *kashrut* rules and more and more married out of the faith. The nineteenth century witnessed little improvement, and, in the 1840s, Rabbi Abraham Rice of Baltimore, the first ordained rabbi to settle here, wrote despairingly to his teacher in Germany that "the character of religious life in this land is on the lowest level" and he wondered "whether a Jew may live in a land such as this."

The great human wave of East European immigrants who flooded these shores in the 1880s and 1890s changed the religious situation for the better—and the worse. Now there were competent rabbis, teachers, *shohetim*, *mohalim*, and other religious functionaries. But, on the other hand, the immigrant generation was not overly pious or learned. The more saintly and scholarly chose to remain at home in Russia or Poland rather than chance this *trefa medinah* (impure land). The immigrants yearned, à la David Levinsky, to "make it" economically no matter what sacred principles they had to discard. Moreover, the immigrants were insistent upon shedding their "greenhorn" image and becoming "Yankees." So off went the *sheitel* and beard; the prohibition against working on the Sabbath was ignored; the study of Torah was replaced by night school and college. In a survey of New York's Lower East Side in 1917 it was found that but 25% of workers rested on the Sabbath and 60% of the shops owned by Jews were open on that sacred day.⁷

Things have scarcely improved in our time. Only 16% of Jews attend services weekly and *kashrut* is kept in a minority of Jewish homes. The Orthodox have seen a steady erosion in their ranks. The existence of a huge body of "non-observant Orthodox" cannot be denied and the further one moves away from New York City the weaker the observant Orthodox are. Various communal studies have shown that in the third generation there is a sharp trend away from Orthodoxy. In Providence, for example, 41.3% of the foreign born Jews are Orthodox but only 6.3% of the third generation are. Similar phenomena have been observed in Boston, Milwaukee, and elsewhere. Conservative Jews are even less ritu-

5. Gilbert Rosenthal, *Four Paths to One God* (New York, 1973), pp. 21–25.

6. Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewry—Documents—Eighteenth Century* (Cincinnati, 1959), pp. 129, 160, 166, 179.

7. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 146 ff.

ally oriented despite the official platform of the movement which espouses *kashrut*, *shabbat*, *yom tov*, etc. A survey of the leadership of the Conservative movement has revealed that few come to services weekly, still less maintain kosher homes and only half understand the Hebrew of the prayers. Whereas Reform Jews are not committed to halakhah, they have little loyalty to basic *mizvot* endorsed by their denomination. For example, only half of Reform Jews light Sabbath candles; only 7% attend services weekly; and fully 10% have Christmas trees in their homes. Obviously, the gap between the "élite" and "folk" religion is considerable.⁸

Jews have created new religious standards and a new scale of values of *mizvot*. Major *mizvot* such as the Sabbath have been downgraded; minor *mizvot* such as Hanukkah have been ballyhooed as Jewry's answer to the December dilemma. Bar Mizvah and Bat Mizvah observances and celebrations have escalated into major events in Jewish life, and have become the boon as well as the bane of American Judaism. They are the boon because without them it is highly improbable that most boys and girls would attend religious schools. But they are also the bane of Jewish life because most parents and children view Bar and Bat Mizvah as the end of Jewish education and the culmination of Jewish learning. The vast majority of children in Orthodox and Conservative Talmud Torahs drop out at thirteen and, even in Reform ranks, fewer children continue to the age of confirmation. Clearly, American Jews follow the non-ritualistic pattern of American Christians: they are simply not halakhic Jews!

But neither are they aggadic Jews; their theological and ideological commitments are about as deep as the Jordan River. Americans are generally a pragmatic folk; they are not addicted to deep theology and will shuttle between one Protestant sect or another with relative ease. American Jews are similarly disposed. What is important to them is the *act* of believing rather than the *content* of believing. Most Jews are part of a particular synagogue because of the "desire to remain separate,"⁹ as Glazer and Moynihan suggest. And most Jews join one synagogue or one denomination in preference to another because of the flimsiest and most un-theological reasons. Even the Reform movement, which was founded on a carefully formulated theological program, has discovered that Reform theology is largely irrelevant as a shaper of values.¹⁰

Naturally, new ideas and shifting social and religious values in the

8. Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), pp. 171-232. For Boston, see the study of Morris Axelrod, Floyd J. Fowler, and Arnold Gurin, published in Marshall Sklare (ed.), *The Jewish Community in America* (New York, 1974), pp. 115-127. Cf. Howard Polsky's "A Study of Orthodoxy in Milwaukee: Social Characteristics, Beliefs, and Observances" in *The Jews*, edited by Marshall Sklare (Glencoe, Ill., 1958), pp. 325-346. On the differences between "élite" and "folk" religion, cf. Charles Liebman, *The Ambivalent America Jew* (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 42-87.

9. Glazer and Moynihan, *Op. cit.*, pp. 163, 180.

10. Leonard Fein, *et al.*, "Reform is a Verb," reprinted in Sklare's *The Jewish Community in America*, pp. 115-127.

general community have added leavening to the Jewish ferment. Nineteenth century rationalism, liberalism, and romanticism, imported from England and Germany, had their effect on American Protestantism, as did social Darwinism and historicism.¹¹ Similarly, these moods shaped the theology of American Reform and Conservative Judaism. Mordecai M. Kaplan's pragmatism derived from John Dewey's philosophy. The "God is dead" phenomenon of the 1960s among Protestant thinkers influenced the theology of radical Jewish philosophers like Richard Rubenstein and Sherwin Wine, although this approach has attracted few partisans. Today, the Women's Liberation Movement is convulsing the Conservative group and has touched the other denominations as well. Thus, the Conservative congregations are hotly debating whether to implement the view of the Rabbinical Assembly's Law Committee calling for equalization of women's role in religious services. The Reform and Reconstructionist groups had, *de jure*, long since equalized the position of women in Jewish life. But, *de facto*, it is only recently, in response to the Women's Liberation Movement, that the two groups have ordained female rabbis and cantors. The Women's Liberation Movement has even left its mark on the Orthodox. Women students at several Orthodox establishments have begun to hold religious services and some students have even donned the traditionally male *tallit*. The National Orthodox Leadership Conference, held in November of 1975, conducted a seminar on the role of today's Orthodox women and the wife of a prominent Orthodox rabbi openly espoused the cause of equalization of females in the movement and the ordination of female rabbis.

To be sure, there is nothing unusual about the effect of non-Jewish civilizations on Judaism. Such interchanges took place in the past; but the Jewish civilization was always strong enough to maintain a healthy symbiosis by removing the poison of the alien culture, integrating its best features, and emerging the stronger for it. Today this is no longer the case. Jewish religious life is so inherently weak that we are witnessing more assimilation and disintegration than acculturation and integration.

One of the significant factors in the weakening of the Jewish component in American Jewry is the lack of community structure. We have never had a *kehillah* or *Gemeinde* in America. In Christian or Muslim lands, the Jewish community was a well-organized, tightly knit, state-within-a-state. There was a *nagid*, a chief rabbi, a *va-ad*, a true communal structure. And even after the Emancipation, Jewish communities preserved a semblance of a *Cultusgemeinde* and, in places such as France, Italy, and England, a chief rabbi.¹² This was never the case in America. Here we followed the Protestant pattern which was non-hierarchical and structured along independent, congregational lines with virtual autonomy and

11. Ahlstrom, *Op. cit.*, pp. 583-614, 763-784.

12. Rosenthal, *Op. cit.*, pp. 18-22. Also, cf. my volume, *New Directions in the Jewish Family and Community*, (New York, 1974), pp. 15-30.

independence for each congregation.¹³ Consequently, we had no chief rabbi, no unity, no overall control over religious standards or philanthropy, and no enforcement of religious standards. The resulting voluntarism led to rampant individualism and downright anarchy. When there was but one synagogue in a community, coercion and controls could be applied. But it was apparent, even in the early days of America, that a Jew did not have to join a synagogue in order to be married, live a normal life, or be buried. And once the single-synagogue monopoly was shattered and congregations lost control over *kashrut*, cemeteries and matzah baking, then religious school sanctions and unity were virtually eliminated.

The various attempts at unifying American Jewry were all ill-fated. Starting with the inability of the six extant congregations to felicitate the newly inaugurated President Washington in a unified epistle, and continuing through the failure to build a synod to regulate religious law in the mid-nineteenth century, the short-lived Board of Delegates of American Israelites, the Jacob Joseph fiasco, and the New York Kehillah, American Jews outdid their Protestant neighbors in their allergy to unity.¹⁴ Today, attempts at creating a unified voice in "umbrella" organizations, such as the Synagogue Council of America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, founder because each constituent uses the veto to protect its position and its independence.

The lack of *kehillah*, plus the absence of an ordained rabbi until 1840, meant that, in the early days, Jewish religious life and education were in the hands of frequently incompetent and ignorant laymen. Little wonder that religious and educational chaos ensued—a chaos whose effects are very much with us today. But, strangely, American Jews then did a radical about-face and spawned a caste of rabbis, cantors, and "professional" Jews who act in lieu of the laymen, who pray and study for them, who observe the *mizvot* for them. Here I detect the influence of Catholicism, for the rabbi has now been fashioned into the mold of the priest in that he is viewed as the "professional" Jew and the mediator between man and God. If the laymen were supreme during the first two centuries in America, they certainly have abdicated their religious roles to the new caste.

A final note on the impact of America on Jewish religious life. America has never had an official, legally sanctioned anti-Semitic history. We have had no pogroms here and the federal government and Constitution assiduously protect (and even aid) all religions equally. Many of the states specifically proscribe religious discrimination in employment, education, and housing, though it is true that some states have lagged behind

13. Ahlstrom, *Op. cit.*, pp. 155 ff. Also, see Seymour M. Lipset, "The American Jewish Community in a Comparative Context," in *The Ghetto and Beyond*, edited by Peter I. Rose (New York, 1969), pp. 118–149.

14. Rosenthal, *Four Paths*, pp. 18–22; Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 101 ff.; Abraham Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XLIV, 3 (March, 1955): 129–198; Arthur Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community* (New York, 1971), *passim*.

in affording political rights to Jews and other minorities. Anti-Semitism and discriminatory laws persisted from the days of Peter Stuyvesant to the present and bigotry still lingers in housing, employment, social relations, and other areas of the private sector. But America has been vastly different from the Old World. When the renowned Yiddish preacher, Zvi Masliansky, came to the United States around the turn of the century, he was invited to deliver a Sabbath sermon at a famous East Side synagogue. He literally had to fight his way through the throngs who had turned out to hear him and had it not been for the New York police, who formed a protective wedge, he never would have made it. He recorded his amazement at the difference between his new land and his native Russia. There the Czarist police fought to prevent him from speaking; here the police came to his aid. This unparalleled freedom has been, of course, an unusual blessing. But it has also created the dilemma of living a full, creative Jewish life in an unprecedentedly free and open society.

III

While America has influenced Jewish religious life for good and for ill, the Jewish civilization has made its mark on Christian religious life in America as well. The Puritan-Pilgrim debt to classical Judaism is well known and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the Puritans and Pilgrims who settled America drew much inspiration from the Hebrew Bible and its heroes and were deeply indebted to Hebraic law and institutions as well as language.

But it has been modern, rather than Biblical, Judaism that made its greatest contribution to American life. For example, although America officially espouses the notion of separation of church and state in its federal Constitution, that doctrine has been in need of clarification and bolstering. Frequently, Jews have served as gadflies in preserving that separation. Way back in 1658, a Jewish doctor named Jacob Lumbrozo was convicted of blasphemy under Maryland's so-called Toleration Act for having denied the divinity of Jesus. Although sentenced to death, he was subsequently freed. Rabbis Isaac Mayer Wise and Max Lilienthal of Ohio and Sabato Morais in Pennsylvania fought the use of the term "Christian nation," while Rabbi Marcus Jastrow blocked a move to designate Pennsylvania a "Christian state." These were but early examples of the many cases spearheaded by Jews or by Jewish organizations to clarify the "establishment clause" of the Constitution and to erect an unbreachable wall between church and state. Battles have been successfully waged to keep prayers out of the public schools, crèches off of public property, and public funds from being used for religious purposes.¹⁵

Jews have helped lead the assault on other anachronisms of Euro-

15. Rosenthal, *Four Paths*, pp. 5-11; Oscar and Mary Handlin, "The Acquisition of Political and Social Rights by the Jews in the United States," *American Jewish Yearbook* 56 (1955), pp. 43-98.

pean intolerance. The Blue laws are still on the books and the Supreme Court has upheld their Constitutionality, but Jewish pressures have persuaded municipal councils to alleviate those vestiges of Puritan piety by allowing Jewish Sabbath observers to open on Sunday.¹⁶ Jews have waged victorious campaigns for public worship. The Dutch had proscribed a public synagogue for the newcomers of the 1650s, but, by 1695, a New York map shows that a synagogue existed. It was the same story in other colonies. And once the Jews got the right to public worship, what was to stop the other sects from applying for the same privilege? The struggle of Jews for religious, civil, and political rights helped others in their campaign. The Jews who toppled society's turrets of bigotries helped democratize this land even more. For example, the law appointing chaplains in the Civil War required that they come from a recognized Christian denomination. The Board of Delegates of American Israelites and the Reverend Arnold Fischel successfully lobbied to change the law so that, in 1862, Jewish chaplains were admitted to the military.¹⁷ Again, this was not *only* a Jewish victory; it was a victory for all denominations. Through these struggles, Jews have helped to make religious and cultural pluralism a fact of American life and have furthered the cause of religious, social, and political liberalism.

Jewry in America has been in religious ferment and we have produced seminal religious thinkers of the eminence of Kaufmann Kohler, Solomon Schechter, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mordecai M. Kaplan, Robert Gordis, Jacob Agus, and Eliezer Berkovits, to mention just a few.¹⁸ They have had their impact on non-Jewish theologians and philosophers. Moreover, Jewish religious thinkers have helped shape religious thought and create new ethical trends. Felix Adler introduced Ethical Culture; Mordecai M. Kaplan popularized religious humanism; and the religious existentialism of Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, and Abraham J. Heschel has enriched the thinking of philosophers such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and James Pike.

America's Jews have created institutions that have struck responsive notes in Christian religious life. For example, the synagogue-center, that uniquely American Jewish creation, has found its parallel in the church-center. Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, fashioner of the synagogue-center, had envisioned it to be more than a religious institution; he wanted the synagogue to be the focal point of educational, cultural, social, and athletic activities as well, because he wanted Jews to gravitate to the synagogue and to make it their second home. Thus, he organized the Jewish Center in 1918, the Brooklyn Jewish Center in 1920, and the Society for the Advancement of Judaism in 1922, thereby setting in motion a chain

16. Milton Konvitz, "Inter-Group Relations," in *The American Jew: A Reappraisal*, edited by Oscar Janowsky, (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 75-100.

17. Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 56-97.

18. I have analyzed these and other religious thinkers of American Jewry in my *Four Paths to One God*.

reaction that has generated hundreds of similar institutions in all branches of Judaism and turned many churches into similar centers.

The new type of rabbi produced in America has been a paradigm for the new breed of Christian clergyman. I suppose that there was a mutual influence in this area and it is not totally clear who influenced whom. Christian clergymen such as Bishop Henry Cadman Potter, Father Edward McGlynn and the Reverends John Haynes Holmes, Walter Rauschenbusch, Charles Parkhurst, and John Howard Melish were deeply involved in social issues and committed to bringing Christianity to the factory, labor unions, and political processes. Similarly, Rabbis Stephen Wise, Judah Magnes, Abba Hillel Silver, and Israel Goldstein—to mention but four—insisted that Judaism must not be confined to the synagogue alone, and their involvement in public issues, labor controversies, political parties, and the struggle for social justice became an exemplar for other rabbis, as well as for Christian clergymen. The new breed of American rabbi was no longer a cloistered Talmudic scholar whose role in life was to answer ritual queries.

In sum, while American civilization has been the dominant force in shaping American Jewry, American Judaism has left its impress on the formulation of American culture and Christian civilization as well.

IV

What of the future? What trends will American Jewish religion follow in the decades ahead? The Talmud warned that, since the destruction of Jerusalem's Temple, prophecy has been turned over to fools. Not being enamored of such a label, I am reluctant to play the prophet. But certain trends are emerging unmistakably from the welter of today's Judaism.

The demographic factor is, for example, a potent one. We behold an American Jewry, overwhelmingly native-born, college educated, fairly affluent, and urban or suburban in residence. We also witness a dangerous decline of the birthrate, a soaring rate of mixed marriages, an aging population, and a decline in the percentage of Jews in this nation from 3.3% to 2.6%. Significantly, Jewish population centers are shifting and the great areas of settlement in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, and elsewhere are dispersing to the suburbs or to totally new areas such as Florida, Arizona, and California. This phenomenon has its demerits and merits. As Jews abandon old neighborhoods, old loyalties to synagogues, yeshivot, and community institutions are lost. Huge tracts of formerly Jewish neighborhoods are becoming *Judenrein* in record time. What is to become of those institutions? Of Jews (usually the poor and aged) left behind? Of traditional loyalties?¹⁹

19. In Fred Massarik's latest population study of New York's Jews, published in the *American Jewish Yearbook* 76 (1975–76), he finds a drop of 608,000 in the Jewish population of the five boroughs of New York City in the decade from 1962–1971! Unquestionably, there has been a continued exodus of Jews from 1971–1976. And the same exodus can be

But there is a positive aspect to the shifting sands of Jewish settlement. In urban centers, Jewish affiliation with synagogues had been notoriously low; in suburbia, however, the rate has risen dramatically to well over 50%. Jews who never attended synagogue before suddenly are loyal worshippers. Jews who never worked for a religious or philanthropic cause are propelled into leadership. Jews who were turned off of Judaism and Torah are miraculously turned on. The dispersion of the old urban settlement is, accordingly, not an unmitigated disaster.

New religious expressions and novel religious approaches seem to be the order of the day. In their yearning for a sense of community, American Jews are experimenting with *havurot*, small religious fellowships, intimate *shtieblakh*, unstructured synagogues, home *minyanim*, innovative services, and the like. The occult has attracted some of the young; Oriental fads have appealed to many collegians, and magic, spiritualism, and guruism have led some to Hari Krishna, Transcendental Meditation, or Lubavitcher Zaddikism. But these are, I suspect, passing phases in the maturation process. Once young people age, produce children and mellow into middle-class respectability, they tend to find their way to synagogues. They might come sooner, I believe, if costs of membership and Jewish education were reduced and the gerontocracy in Jewish life would step aside and welcome newcomers. As of the moment, however, synagogue growth has all but ceased and I suspect that it will stabilize for some time except in growth areas of Florida and the Southwest.²⁰ The Reform and Conservative movements have added virtually no new synagogues in recent years and the rise of new Orthodox *shuls* really represents the relocation of emigrés from decaying urban Orthodox neighborhoods. It is a disquieting fact that there are surpluses of rabbis vis-à-vis congregations for the first time in *all* religious denominations. Whether this situation will improve depends on demographic factors plus the ultimate affiliation of many young people who currently go nowhere. If past trends are any indication, we can anticipate a return of those currently unaffiliated to the formal synagogue and temple within the next decade.

Additionally, we are witnessing a realignment of the religious groups in Jewry. Orthodoxy has adopted a more stridently separatist stance than ever before. It has broken with policies of the so-called umbrella organizations, such as the National Community Relations Advisory Council and the Synagogue Council of America, on the issues of church-state relationship. Curiously, it has approximated the Roman Catholic position on abortion, government aid to parochial schools, and prayer in the public schools. It seems to be determined to go it alone on issues of vital concern to its own group while cooperating with others only when pragmatically

observed in other urban centers as America's Jews flee to suburbs or to the "sunbelt" states. 20. The decline parallels the drop in church membership which was down 0.14 percent or 179,425 people in 1974 according to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* 1975. Only the Roman Catholics showed a slight growth of .01 percent.

necessary.²¹ Reform and Conservative Judaism are drawing nearer as Reform restores many discarded traditions and Conservatives become more liberal. But I doubt whether the prophecy of David Philipson and Maurice Eisendrath, that the two groups will ultimately unite, will come true, given the institutional loyalties, personality clashes, and commitment of Conservatism to halakhah.²² Reconstructionism, on the other hand, has cut the Gordian knot that bound it to the Conservative movement and has charted its own, separate course as a full-blown movement. Unity of Jewish religious groups is, I fear, as chimerical as ever and the prospect of shaping a *Cultusgemeinde* is still but a dream.

Finally, I think that we will continue to observe a curious contrapuntal phenomenon in religious life. Jews will continue to slip away through mixed marriage and assimilation in increasing measure; *mizvot* such as Sabbath and *kashrut* will doubtlessly continue to fall into desuetude. On the other hand, we shall continue to observe a return to tradition by small, but zealous, groups of Jews. Jewish ethnicity and the State of Israel have caused a resurgence of Jewish identification and I believe that, for the near future, it will continue to propel young Jews to study Hebrew, visit Israel, and flaunt Jewishness on the campus in an unprecedented way. I cannot, however, foresee a widespread return to halakhah.

Which of these two divergent trends will prevail? Is it to be a continued, mutually enriching symbiosis between American culture and Jewish culture? Or is the dominant civilization to submerge the Jewish component? We must not despair, for we should recall that it took almost eight centuries for Spanish Jewry to emerge from the darkness of Visigoth ignorance into the radiance of the Golden Age. The same time lag occurred in Babylonia and Poland and in other centers of Jewish settlement. American Jews are really not much more than a century old, despite the early pioneers, so that we are still a very young, very immature community. Much has been achieved in this short time; much remains to be done. Whatever is to be the future of the Jewish religion, I anticipate that American Jews will continue to play their contrapuntal themes with their customary passion.

21. See Konvitz, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98–100; Solomon Poll, "The Persistence of Tradition," in *The Ghetto and Beyond*, pp. 118–149; *Four Paths*, pp. 70–73, 77–81; Charles Liebman in *The Future of the Jewish Community in America*, edited by David Sidorsky (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 152 ff. See the recent pronouncements of the Rabbinical Council of America against liberal abortion laws, urging government aid to parochial schools, etc. (New York Times, January 27 and 28, 1976).

22. Note, for example, the Conservative movement's permission to ride to synagogue on Sabbath and Festivals (1950); its new *ketubah* (1954); its recommendation to make the observance of the Second Day of *Yom Tov* optional (1969); and its more recent equalization of the role of women in synagogue worship (1973). The Reform movement began its swing back to tradition with the Columbus Platform of 1937 and has continued the trend, as evidenced by its new *Union Prayer Book* (1975), which is almost 800 pages long and is filled with Hebrew, references to Zion, etc.

Jews and Contributions to Economics: A Bicentennial Review

MARK PERLMAN

1776 WAS THE YEAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

It was also the year of the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. American independence was the forerunner of the growth of one of the most open, if not the most open, of societies in world history. The publication of the *Wealth of Nations* led to the development of the contemporary discipline of economics. There was considerable social mobility in the American colonies prior to Independence. The economics discipline existed in considerable complexity prior to Adam Smith's second book (the *Wealth of Nations*). In other words, a bicentennial review is simply an artifact; considerable went on before the beginning of this two hundred year period, and there is nothing final about taking a look at the two hundredth anniversary.

Nonetheless, retrospective viewing has its uses and the two hundredth anniversary of not one but two phenomena encourages us to make broader rather than narrower assessments.

The impact of Smith's work on American economic development is quite clear. Alexander Hamilton, one of the dominant voices at the Constitutional Convention and the first Secretary of the Treasury, was thoroughly conversant with Smith's work and its argument. Moreover, he seems to have been in agreement with Smith's principal conclusions, which were, on the whole, a rather judicious set of insights regarding the relationship of individuals, the production process, and national (and, to a lesser degree, international) economic development. If Adam Smith had any strong views about Jews and economics, I find no record of them. Maybe like the sensitive Scot that he was, he perceived materialism (concern about tangible goods and services) as much a Scottish concern as a Jewish "monopoly." He does mention that Hebrew was not part of the conventional university curriculum and has some harsh suggestions that its exclusion was the result of excessive reliance on Catholic Church doctrinal authorities.

All of us, particularly those who have read long lists of achievements by American Jews, are aware that at the time of the American Revolution there were relatively few Jews in the colonies. True, there were some, and of these only a very small number played a noticeable role in eighteenth century finance and business. The discipline of economics, as such, was not then an academic subject. Its entry into American universities was delayed until the middle part of the nineteenth century, at a time when

(and quite unrelated to it) a wave of German-Jewish immigration was beginning to become substantial. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, and particularly since the last two decades of that century, formal economics (as denoted by an academic discipline) has become part of virtually every American college and university. In that same span of years the American Jewish community, having previously seen German Jews replace Spanish-Portuguese Jews as the dominant Jewish type, has seen East European Jews replace German Jews and, then, homogenized American-born Jews with less and less perception of the various cultures of their family's national origin, replace the East European group.

In brief, while this is a bicentenary year, most of the action, both in the case of the economics discipline and in the case of the American Jewish community, has been of relatively recent occurrence. From the standpoint of our interest the concept of "bicentennial" is not signally appropriate; nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, the uses of history (reviews of the past) are there.

This essay, however, undertakes a somewhat more difficult task than simply trying to give a picture of the changing role of Jews in the economics discipline. The key question to which it is addressed is whether there is anything particularly Jewish about American economics—have American Jews contributed something Jewish to the discipline or have they simply contributed an influence which is similar, perhaps congruent, to the contributions made by others?

I am led to this point by my recollection of a particularly intriguing book review appearing almost thirty years ago in an early issue of *Commentary* magazine.¹ The review was of a collection of essays written by Mr. Justice Nathan Cardozo. Cardozo, then dead less than a decade, was popularly perceived as *the* craftsman in the American legal tradition. Most other reviewers of this volume of collected works virtually outdid themselves in praising the author. They eulogized his judgments, his style, and his attractive (if shy) modesty. Occasionally, these reviewers did mention Cardozo's Jewishness, if only by repeating the story of Mr. Justice McReynold's shameful behavior at the time of the Cardozo nomination hearings and on the day when Cardozo took his seat in the Court. But only Professor Daniel Boorstin, now the Librarian of Congress, went to the heart of the matter (which is my point). Dr. Boorstin noted that the learned Cardozo completely omitted any reference to Jewish sources in these essays. In other words, Cardozo, although seen as a very able Jewish man who made intellectual history while a member of the Supreme Court, gave no indication of his Jewishness in his work. And while Jews (and everyone else) should take pride in what Cardozo did achieve, there is nothing intrinsically Jewish about that achievement, except that (as in Cardozo's case) an American Jew (with a Tammany-tainted father) was

1. Daniel J. Boorstin's review of Margaret Hall [ed.], *Selected Writings of Benjamin N. Cardozo* in *Commentary*, 6 (Sept. 1948): 290-92.

given an opportunity, seized that opportunity, and made American (although in no sense Jewish) intellectual history.

II

Before anyone, Jewish or otherwise, usually can make any contribution to an academic discipline,² not only must the discipline, itself, be discernibly established, but the individual has to have sufficient recognition to be read or heard. In other words, individual Jews had to be commonly understood before it could be said that they had made a contribution. As one might expect, the first American Jew to be heard on the subject of economics was from a somewhat assimilated Spanish-Portuguese family. He was Jacob Newton Cardozo (1786–1873), an earlier member of the aforementioned Cardozo family.

This Cardozo, born in New York, was a newspaper man, who spent his career in Charleston, South Carolina. He was in favor of Southern economic development, then largely based on international trade. He was versed in the emerging economics discipline and was particularly aware of the economic writings of David Ricardo, an English erstwhile Jew (married to a Quaker), who gets even higher marks as a professional economist than does Adam Smith. Cardozo took issue with some of the ratiocinative details of the Ricardian argument. The details of the difference do not seem to me to be particularly noteworthy, yet it may be significant to point out that even if the essential “efficiency-materialism” (which is central to the concern of all economists, e.g., Smith, or Cardozo) is conceived by many as being “Jewish” in the pejorative sense, one’s enemies do not identify the nature of one’s contributions. It may be argued that a materialist society is one in which Jews operate relatively easily, only because they do not have to get involved with the intricacies of anti-materialist spiritual (i.e., religious) priorities.

Professor Joseph Dorfman, the preeminent historian of the American economics discipline, describes Jacob Cardozo as, “the only man in pre-Civil War America whose mind operated in that high level of abstraction that characterized the work of Ricardo and his school.”³

The question is how Jewish was Ricardo’s or Cardozo’s economics? I have already suggested that there may be those who claim that economics, because it deals with material goods and services, has distinctly Jewish overtones; but I have disclaimed this argument. Economics, as a discipline, has a better claim to Scottish paternity than to Jewish. However,

2. I grant that some unknown could create a discipline, much as Zeus is said to have created Athena. However, I cannot readily think of an example.

3. For a discussion of Jacob N. Cardozo see Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization, 1606–1865* (New York: Viking, 1946), vol. 2, pp. 551–66, 852–62. See, also, the article on Cardozo in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 3, p. 162; Cardozo’s credentials as a Jew were more tenuous than his credentials as an economist. Perhaps there is a message in this point.

there are those who claim that modern economic analysis, with its reliance upon models and ratiocination, abstraction, and immanent criticism, is "Talmudical" and, by association, therefore, Jewish. What Cardozo, and earlier, Ricardo, had done was to construct models (i.e., explicit rational arguments) as a basis for making public decisions. Many Jews have done this with Talmudical principles: *pilpul* is one example of such a construct. And so those who have opposed these policies, and particularly reliance upon the reasoning involved, have popularly buttressed their offensive by claiming that this abstractionism is culturally alien—even casuistically Jewish. However, when it comes to such careful reasoning, René Descartes was also no mean abstractionist (and I could name several dozen others); Descartes as well as the several others were not Jewish. Thus, I fail to see that abstractionism in any branch of knowledge, including economics, is essentially a Jewish cultural contribution. That Jews, like Spinoza, were good at the logical method does not necessarily say much about the method's origins. My verdict regarding the possible Jewishness of Ricardo's contribution is the Scottish one, "case not proven."

The more basic principle, and one from which to draw, is simply that in order to make any contribution to economics, individuals have to be identified as economists; thus, if Jews seek to make a contribution, they must first be individually recognized. In practice, such recognition may come easier if the contribution is not initially identified as culturally alien. The resistance of the academic establishment to taking in economics, on the first hand, and to taking in Jews, on the second, has been well documented. Ricardo and Jacob Cardozo did not stress any Jewishness in their economic views; that these views were seriously considered was, probably, achievement enough for anyone—particularly a Jew, erstwhile or active.

III

It is now a commonplace that Jews migrated to America in a series of increasingly large "waves," and that the process of cultural assimilation was well under way by the time that the third generation of each wave had become mature. These waves were (1) Spanish-Portuguese, (2) German, and (3) East European. As with the migration waves of Jews to America, so later with the admission of Jews to the universities, except that the Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) wave rose prior to the emergence of economics as an academic discipline; indeed, it rose even before the universities became the "corridor to power." The earliest significant appointments of Jews to American economics departments were in the 1880's and the 1890's. In 1888, Edwin R. A. Seligman (1861–1939), scion of the famous New York banking family, was appointed Adjunct Professor of Political Economy at Columbia University, from which he had earlier received a

baccalaureate degree in 1879.⁴ Seligman's career at Columbia is, itself, from the standpoint of American economics, important. He was one of the founders of the American Economic Association in 1885. He was appointed to one of the first principal chairs in economics (the [Columbia] McVicar Professorship of Political Economy in 1904), which he held until his retirement in 1931. And, even after that date, he was a significant economist insofar as he was the principal editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.

Seligman had many professional interests. He was widely active in reform causes which ranged from advocacy of progressive taxation to interest in government regulation of industry and working conditions. His economics work focused more on concrete rather than on abstract issues. His taxation analysis and his work in the area of the history of economic thought was relatively unencumbered with esoteric rigor. He was apparently a good undergraduate teacher, and is still best known as an indefatigable discoverer of "forgotten great economists" and as a discriminating collector of early economics tracts. His personal library was donated to Columbia University where it remains as one of the two greatest American collections of early economic writings. In his professional work, he seems to me to have been less rigorous than Cardozo; however, his impact on the profession was clearly greater.

Amongst other things, Seligman was active in the New York City Ethical Culture movement, which, itself, had distinct traditional, social-responsibility Jewish resonances. Some may feel that this social justice reform interest may have stemmed from Seligman's early exposure to the literature of the Prophets. But Seligman's boyhood tutor was no *melamed*; he was actually none other than Horatio Alger, Jr., and it is unlikely that Seligman, the boy, learned much Jewish interpretation of the Prophetic message from that particular tutor. Nonetheless, he had generous views on charity which seem to me to have been as much a part of the American-Christian eschatological tradition as anything else. I conclude, therefore, that it would be disingenuous to conclude that Seligman's economics, reflecting (1) common sense rather than rigorous analysis and (2) a rich American's *noblesse oblige* sense of kindly charity, was significantly Jewish. Historically, it was probably enough (again) that he, a Jew, played a key role in the organizational growth of the discipline, even if his intellectual impact on it was not distinctively Jewish.

The other well-known Jewish economics professor during that period was Jacob H. Hollander (1871–1940), a Johns Hopkins A.B. and Ph.D. (1892, 1894). Hollander, although of Russian-Jewish extraction had married into the affluent German-Jewish Hutzler family of Balti-

4. For a discussion of Seligman, see Dorfman, *Op. cit.* vol. 3, pp. 253–56, and the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, p. 1131.

more; professionally and socially he seems thereafter to have floated on the German wave. When Hollander's young wife died, the family established the Hutzler Chair in Political Economy at Johns Hopkins; Hollander was appointed to that Chair, which he occupied until his death in 1940.

Hollander was one of the more rigorous American economists interested in the classical school. Seligman chose Hollander to write the article on David Ricardo in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* because he considered Hollander to be the most rigorous of the leading American admirers of orthodox Ricardian economics. There is nothing in Hollander's treatment of Ricardo which stressed any Jewish contribution to the discipline, although Hollander allocated considerable energy in tracking down the Jewishness of Ricardo's paternal family and investigating Ricardo's education, which, Hollander indicated, included two years at the Amsterdam Portuguese Synagogue's *Talmud Torah*. These years were at the end of Ricardo's adolescence. He returned from Amsterdam, so Hollander tells us, spent a short apprenticeship with his father, left his father's home and faith and went to work in the British stock exchange on his own, and married Mrs. Ricardo, who was clearly of non-Jewish origins. Hollander reports that the family did not accept Ricardo's marriage.

But, back to Hollander. In his early years he had a keen interest in the history of the American Jewish community, and, in the 1890's, wrote several monographs on that subject. They were published by the Jewish Historical Society.⁵ Hollander was also relatively active in Baltimore Jewish community activities. At the end of his career, he had to cope with a significant increase in overt anti-Semitism. The last of his University Presidents (the geographer Isaiah Bowman), was infamous for his anti-Semitic postures. While it is true that university presidents do not really "make" universities (and, to some extent, university professors do), the historic and unpleasant fact is that part of the Johns Hopkins legend relates to Hollander's self-denigrating attempts to cope with Bowman's prejudices.

On balance, I am disposed to argue that both Seligman and Hollander thought that economics had basically a scientific *wertfrei* character; each was concerned with the origins of economics but thought that it was,

5. These include:

"Some Unpublished Material Relating to Dr. Jacob Lumbrozo of Maryland," *Publ. Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc.* 1 (1893): 25-39.

"Civil Status of the Jews in Maryland, 1636-1776," *Ibid.*, 2 (1894): 33-44.

"A Sketch of Haym Salomon," *Ibid.*, 2: 5-19.

"Some Further References to Haym Salomon," *Ibid.*, 3 (1895): 7-11.

"The Naturalization of Jews in the American Colonies Under the Act of 1740," *Ibid.*, 5 (1896): 103-17.

"Documents Relating to the Attempted Departure of the Jews from Surinam in 1675," *Ibid.*, 6 (1897): 9-29.

if anything, a compound of Jewish and Christian cultural traditions which played the significant part in the development of the subject. Theirs was the usual view of the topic, and both were relatively conventional professors. Hollander clearly had a more active Jewish identification than Seligman, but neither carried anything uniquely Jewish into his professional work.

IV

Immediately after the first World War several Jews of Russian or East European extraction managed to get appointments to certain economics faculties. Jacob Viner, a native of Montreal but a graduate of Harvard University, was appointed Professor at Chicago in 1925. Leo Sharfman, a Russian born economist who arrived in America by way of Tientsin, was appointed Professor (and later chairman) at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In 1921, my father, Selig Perlman, was appointed to the faculty at the University of Wisconsin where he remained until shortly before his death in 1959. The number of Jews appointed to major faculty positions in economics increased slightly in the 1930's. Professor Simon Kuznets, a Russian-Jew educated at Columbia University under Wesley Clair Mitchell, was appointed to the University of Pennsylvania faculty. Arthur F. Burns, now Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, was appointed Professor at Rutgers University. There were other appointments of significance, too, but those that I have mentioned were among the most noteworthy.

There was also great resistance to Jewish appointments. For blatant examples there was the case of Milton Friedman, who, in 1940, was denied a tenured position at the University of Wisconsin for overtly anti-Semitic reasons; also, Professor Paul Samuelson, undoubtedly the ablest graduate of the economics department of Harvard University, was not appointed at Harvard University upon the completion of his doctoral work. Samuelson went "down the river" to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was instrumental in creating a department every bit as distinguished as Harvard's is now, and, quite likely, considerably better than Harvard's was then.

The great influx of Jews into the faculty ranks in economics was after the second World War. By 1960, instances of discrimination against great Jewish economists became all but unknown. The foregoing is not to suggest that discrimination does not still exist; it may well be that the selection of an economics faculty member is not completely stochastic (probabilistic), but certainly a Jew with a modicum of talent is likely to be appointed. Thus, "entry into the theatre" is not presently a significant problem. Whether in this era of compensatory discrimination (in favor of non-Jewish minorities, women, or perhaps, the young), such a halcyon

state will continue to exist, I know not. But, for the moment, it does seem to exist.

In terms of a bicentennial review, the point to be made is that academic economics opened slowly to Jews; generally, it was opened first to Jews of financially established families, and their contributions were not significantly (in the Boorstin sense) Jewish. But was there anything particularly Jewish about any of the contributions of the post-World War I appointments? Thus far I have been rather bearish about anything particularly Jewish in the contribution in the case of the Jews appointed prior to the first World War. I do not argue that either formal economic theory, with its reliance upon abstract analysis, or even concern for Prophetic social reform could not come out of the Jewish tradition; I have merely argued that they could have come from other sources as well. I do think, however, that, in the post-World War I appointment pattern, some of the Jews did incorporate into the economics discipline some elements of clearly Jewish origin. One element in current economic analysis which I think is quite probably of Jewish origin is an interest in defining (including measuring and testing empirically) the problem, within nations, of the rise and fall, as well as the interactions, of economic groups, and of the economic aspects of competition between nations. The approach, as it developed, seems to me to come out of a traditional Jewish fascination with history and its meaning. The Christian tradition in such matters is, in its essentials, teleological; the Jewish is not. To most scholars in the Christian tradition there is some kind of determinism in the process with a promise of a Holy Grail at its end. For those in the Jewish tradition, one studies history for "laws" of action and reaction rather than for discovery of ultimate truth. Whatever concern there was in the East European Jewish cultural tradition for the laws of history came to confront the teleological historicism of Hegel and Marx and blossomed as the revisionist Jewish Marxism of Russia and, later, Poland. It is, when I study it, more easily now seen in its American species as a grafting of a mutated Marxism (inverted Hegelianism), perhaps, but not necessarily, of the Plekhanov variety, onto a "native" American empirical tradition.

Two Jewish economists seem to me to be prime examples of this tradition and their influence on the evolution of American economics is, at the same time, illustrative and indisputable. Both men were clearly products of the Russian-Jewish Marxist pre-1920 crucible. Both, namely Selig Perlman and Simon Kuznets, had a strong grounding (insofar as I understand the significance of their earlier interests) in working out a theory of the relationship between economic causes and historical events. Thus, each, from the first, was interested in trying to explain in economic terms why and how nations grew. Thus, each was interested in "discovering laws of history," and each was exposed to a variety of historical systems prior to developing his own. In my father's case, as a high school student he used the philosophy of the Jewish *Bund* to offset the influence of the

Russian Orthodox dogma presented at his *Gymnasium*.⁶ His teachers had insisted that he learn the Russian Orthodox historical system, although both he and they disagreed with that system. Those teachers, fearing prosecution, were in no position to offer him an articulated alternative, but, apparently, the alternative he initially found for himself was *Menshevism*. Like many Jews of his generation, he read widely in Marxist revisionism—all the time searching for a *Gestalt* to replace the one furnished in the *Gymnasium*. He came to America in 1905, both a convinced Marxist revisionist (his mentor was the theorist, William English Walling) and a young man in search of an education. In 1908 he was sent by Walling to study with Walling's friends, Richard T. Ely and John R. Commons, at the University of Wisconsin. Perlman's fascination with Ely was all but non-existent; his fascination with John R. Commons (and, initially, with Commons' colleague, Frederick Jackson Turner) was of much longer duration—indeed, for the rest of his life. Commons was something of a historical-empiricist. His method stressed episodic analysis, and was, I believe, largely a product of Commons' exposure to the writings of two English legal historians (Henry Maine and Frederick Maitland). Perlman became converted to Commons' historical-empiricism and used it to refashion his Menshevik Marxism into an American Institutional interpretation of the evolution of the labor movement. It is this economic Institutionalism (a school of thought) and its fascination with the rationing of economic opportunity and the role of property rights which, in Perlman's case, had a relatively obvious Jewish-*Bundist* source. Perlman's product was an alternative to the *Bundist* theory of history, but his question and analytical method were unmistakably of *Bundist* origin.

Perlman's experience with moving from a theologically based historical *Weltanschauung* to a Marxian theoretical *Weltanschauung* and from that Marxian *Weltanschauung* to some form of empirical system characterizes the intellectual development of several other European-educated Jewish intellectual immigrants to America. When these intellectuals were confronted by the relatively system-free empirical thinking found in certain American economics departments (I cite Wisconsin and Columbia as two), they sought to develop new systems in order to interpret the American experience. In Selig Perlman's case, as I note, it was a theory of the development of the American working class. His theory, still under attack by professional economic historians within the economics discipline, has been, nonetheless, the standard organization of the subject since it first appeared over fifty years ago. Its virtues are that it is comprehensive and episodically empirical.

6. For a description of the career, including the ideas, of Selig Perlman see Dorfman, *Op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 395, vol. 5, pp. 395–96 and Mark Perlman, *Labor Union Theories in America: Background and Development* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976, 2nd edition), pp. 190–210.

Professor Simon Kuznets,⁷ coming from a background similar, but not quite congruent, to Selig Perlman's, came under the influence of another kind of American empiricist, Wesley Clair Mitchell. Mitchell, Professor of Economics at Columbia University and founder of the National Bureau of Economic Research, was an unusually energetic and imaginative quantitative empiricist. In any event, he was much more than a collector of statistical data, because, more than any other economist of his time, he sought to quantify in order to test economic theory. Kuznets, working at first under and then clearly on a par with Mitchell, started by developing a system for measuring various aspects of economic fluctuations. Initially he dealt with cyclical and seasonal fluctuations. Later he went on to analyze trend (as distinct from cyclical) patterns. During the 1930's he broadened what had by then become his system of quantitative economic analysis to the point where he measured and analyzed not only changes in national economic output, but changes in the components of gross output. Kuznets' efforts were put to spectacular public use during the second World War. These technical efforts largely paralleled work done by others (both Jews and non-Jews) in the United States and particularly Great Britain.

However, the most important of the many important contributions of Kuznets' work were not the measurement techniques, but the end to which he was wont to put them. This end was historical interpretation of the economic growth process. Reading Kuznets' Presidential Address to the American Economic Association in December, 1954 is a fascinating exercise in examining the origins of ideas. While denying the present existence of any valid theoretical framework which explained the economic growth process, he disclosed a continuing faith that such a framework could yet be found; indeed, he has continued to seek it since. Even if one such framework, the stages theory of the economic takeoff, postulated by Professor Walt Rostow (originally at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then in Lyndon Johnson's White House, and now at the University of Texas) which was offered on the basis of Kuznets' work, has been particularly thoroughly attacked by him, his faith persists. Kuznets' attack on Rostow's work is technical. Its ferocity seems to me to reflect Kuznets' judgment that Rostow is close to, but perverting, a truth; thus, the danger. My point is that Kuznets has brought the hunger for a set of laws of historical and economic interaction to American economics. I see that appetite coming from an experience with the Russian (and particularly the Russian Jewish) intellectual climate. Thus, his sense of system stems in perceptible measure from the cultural *Weltanschauung* of the once flourishing intelligentsia, of which the Russian Jewish *Bundist* tradition was one principal flower.

7. For a description of Kuznets' career see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 10, pp. 1306-7. His ideas are briefly treated in an explanation of the 1971 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics by Erik Landberg in the *Swedish Journal of Economics*, 73 (Dec. 1971): 444-61.

Russian Jewish civilization lacked the empirical tradition that flourished in some American economics faculties, and, when certain young Russian Jews bridged the cultural gap, what they produced was at the same time part of traditional Jewish interest in historicity and a product which came to be incorporated into modern economics.

My view, in sum, is that this interest in developing an intellectual historical system to explain economic relationships, while not necessarily involving Jews as detonators of economic change, does have the Jewish interest in historicity as well as the Jewish East European intellectual experience as one of its points of origin. Because of the career opportunity offered by American economics departments to at least two of these East European-educated Jews, American economics now reflects some aspects of the Russian Jewish intellectual's hunger for an intellectual system and a later American-acquired respect for empiricism.

The Jewish Contribution to American Politics

HENRY L. FEINGOLD

THERE WAS A TIME, NOT SO LONG AGO, WHEN A HISTORIAN called upon to discuss a Jewish contribution to any facet of American life would have approached his task with some trepidation. Such inquiries, bound as they are to produce compelling but illusionary identities with the host culture, as well as long lists of heroes, are reminiscent of the apologetics endlessly generated by spokesmen of the immigrant generation to justify the Jewish presence in America. But the bicentennial year is a time for stock-taking and a less differentiated and, for that reason, securer Jewry is more prepared than formerly to take candid measure of its impact on American society. Yet, that readiness to acknowledge its distinctiveness is not easily translatable into concrete terms. If it exists at all, where is its locus and what is specifically Jewish about it?

The problem is nowhere better illustrated than in finding a specific Jewish contribution to, or impact on, American politics. Jews were present at the creation of the republic and played a role in fashioning the religious tolerance linked to an overwhelmingly secular society. There were personalities like the Sheftalls of Georgia, Benjamin Nones, Mordecai Noah and Judah Benjamin who earned some measure of prominence in the politics of the national period. But they were individual voices who made their weight felt on all sides of the political spectrum. The German-Jewish stewards, anxious above all to enter the mainstream of American life, spent much energy in denying the existence of a specific Jewish political thrust. In one sense they were not far wrong. During the German-Jewish hegemony, as well as during the later dominance of the eastern Jews, group priorities were clearly aimed at establishing an economic base. American Jews maintained a relatively low political profile. "We hear of the Irish vote, the German vote, but who ever hears of a Jewish vote?" noted the *Northern Monthly* in 1858. That was the "way things should be," according to the *American Israelite*. "In regard to public and political questions there is no union among us. . . ." Despite men like August Bondi and the outspokenness of some abolitionist rabbis, most Jews, to the dismay of the abolitionists, took their cues on the crucial slavery question from the German-Americans in whose communities they frequently resided.

To some degree, eastern Jews adhered to a similar pattern. At times it appeared as if the radicals among them co-opted the political voice of the community. It frightened patricians like Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall who only dimly perceived that, for most of the new arrivals, the emigration and transplantation experience was revolution enough for one life-

time and that they wanted nothing so much as to make their independent way in the new environment. Eastern Jews were actually loath to take part in the earthy quid-pro-quos which characterized local politics. "Der Ate," the predominantly Jewish eighth district, had a relatively low voter turnout at the turn of the century. Unlike the Irish, who had, in any case, virtually preempted the local political machine, Jews could not conceive of politics as merely another form of group aggrandizement. Having taken almost no part in politics in the "old country," they came to American politics with austere moral assumptions of what the political process was supposed to be. "I was pained by the ease with which corrupt politicians were able to persuade our uneducated Jews to sell their votes," Abraham Cahan relates sadly in his diary. "There were no elections in the country from which we had fled. The ballot box and all it represents was the sacred hope for which many of our socialist comrades in Russia had martyred their lives." It would take years before Jews entered fully into the political process. "The Jews were regarded as so completely taken up with their economic adjustment to the new country," noted one observer, "that their frequently mentioned absence from the political machinery was accepted as entirely explainable." Small wonder, then, that the city with the largest Jewish population in the world did not elect a Jewish mayor until recently and then only when the great metropolis was in decline.

Had the Jewish impact on politics been stronger, identifying its specific Jewish content might have posed less of a problem. To be sure, there has always been intense interest in politics and political ideology among American Jews, but, for various reasons that include the absence of a binding historical experience, its political voice has often lacked coherence and focus. The separate internal political life of the Jewish community, which claimed much of its political energy, had more than its share of fragmentation and strife. Each political segment—anarchist, socialist, Zionist, and their numerous sub divisions—had its own ax to grind and its own insistent claims for loyalty which took precedence over the whole. Jews, especially the Jews of eastern Europe, were an ideologically hot people which, coincidentally, was forced to operate in the ideologically cool atmosphere of an Anglo-Saxon culture. The Kehillah, a remarkable attempt to reestablish the corporateness of New York Jewry on a voluntary basis, succumbed, instead, to the centrifugal ideological pulls within the community. So it would be with virtually all attempts at achieving unity within American Jewry. It was particularly evident in secular politics. The Jewish voter was a maverick who did not take leadership from above. Since followers did not follow, leaders could not lead. The Jewish vote was not so much delivered as it was granted independently by each Jewish voter. Yet there was a definable Jewish political thrust, since Jews appeared to come, independently, to a similar political position.

Not until the post-World War II period did American Jewry achieve

some modicum of unity. The strong association with the Democratic party is actually of relatively recent vintage. The switch from the Republican party occurred in earnest in the election of 1928 and, once in the Democratic fold, Jews quickly assumed key positions in the liberal-urban-ethnic coalition which buttressed the New Deal. It was the Roosevelt administration which taught Jews about the political rewards for loyalty, and few sub-groups were more loyal to Roosevelt than American Jewry. While other hyphenates veered away from the New Deal after the election of 1936, Jews increased their support. They were rewarded, not only with some entrée into Roosevelt's charmed inner circle, but shared fully in Federal office patronage. So intense was the identity of Jews and the New Deal that the pejorative, "Jew Deal," was sometimes used by Roosevelt's many haters. On their part, American Jews, to this day, wear the mantle of New Deal welfare state liberalism even when they are, in fact, something more and less than that. It was the New Deal, then, that gave American Jewry a taste of the sweet fruits of political participation and they did not readily forget the lesson in the postwar decades. During these years their voice was amplified further by a gradual muting of the "uptown"- "downtown" divisions as a result of continued secularization and embourgeoisement. It was the many facets of that class, religious-cultural gap which had kept American Jewry divided during the early decades of the century. In addition, the impact of the Holocaust, which carried with it a lesson on the price of disunity, and the creation of the state of Israel, finally furnished American Jewry with the common seminal historical experiences and a secular Jewish symbol around which it could coalesce.

The period of comparative unity and identity-building was destined to last less than two decades. By the mid-60s there were portents of the impending dissolution of the liberal-urban coalition with which Jews had cast their political lot. In the election of 1972, over 35% of the American Jewish vote was cast in the Republican column. It could be reasoned that this shift in Jewish voter sentiment was a momentary aberration. It was, in any case, not as great as the swing of many other sub-groups to the Right in that election. But there are additional disturbing signs that the Jewish voice on major issues not affecting Israel is once again fragmented. Ethnic, less mobile and less affluent Jews appear to have cast aside the universalistic, liberal ideology to cast their ballots simply on what they sense to be the Jewish group interest. They perceive a political reality where everyone votes his own interest and reason that Jews make themselves vulnerable by not doing so. On the other hand, more Americanized, affluent and educated Jews continue, in some measure, to uphold universalist humanist principles. Thus, the new internal split in American Jewry seems at once to be reminiscent and a reversal of the old uptown-downtown division.

Even such an attenuated examination of the historical background of

American Jewish political behavior is sufficient to raise a major problem. Aside from the fact that it is Jews who are casting their ballots in a certain way, is there any thing distinctively Jewish about the political patterns and preferences of American Jewry? Wherein lies its Jewish component? There are several approaches which present themselves. One might, for example, assume that what is distinctive about Jewish political behavior must ultimately be rooted in the Jewishness of the Jews rather than in a contemporary condition or some other factor. Thus, the historian can make much of the civic virtue of American Jewry for they are, unquestionably, particularly good human material for making democracy work. Studies show that they are consistently better informed on the issues and more involved in the political process, that they and their organizations are more likely to take positions which transcend their parochial interest, that their voting volume ranks above other groups and that they have become an important source of campaign financing. That is all true enough, but what is uniquely Jewish about such behavior? Such data tells us only that Jews are like everyone else, only more so.

Yet, clearly, politically and otherwise, American Jews depart from the norm. They *are* different, but that differentiation is caused more by their specific historical experience than by the memory of the ancient religious and prophetic precepts which originally served to make them a people apart. Few in the largely secularized American Jewish community are knowledgeable about the roots of their idealism in their religio-culture and, undoubtedly, a close scrutiny of sources would inform us that almost any reasonable modern political ideology could find some justification in Scripture. The Jewish political posture in America, as elsewhere, is an external sign, a fingerprint, to deeply rooted historical assumptions regarding the kind of domestic and world order which best assures Jewish continuance. The *sine qua non* of Jewish political behavior is survival, and the associations with modern secular ideologies like liberalism¹ or socialism or some other form of humanistic universalism are adhered to if they offer appropriate survival strategies. (In that sense, much of the political dialogue within the Jewish community really concerns itself with a conflict over what is more crucial for Jewish survival—the survival of Jews or of Judaism. That differentiation emerges most clearly in Isaac Deutcher's essay, *The Non-Jewish Jew* [Oxford University Press, 1968] in which he argues that he would give up Judaism in return for the six million victims of the Holocaust. Such a transaction was, of course, never in the offing.) Classifying American Jewish political proclivities as liberal, a standard practice among observers of Jewish political

1. That observers regard Jewish "liberal" proclivities as permanent, rather than as part of an ongoing search for suitable systems, is nowhere better indicated than in a recent work by Mark R. Levy and Michael Kramer, *The Ethnic Factor: How American Minorities Decide Elections* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1973). The chapter devoted to Jewish political behavior is titled "The Jews: Forever Liberal Wherever They Are."

behavior, is inadequate because it neither transmits the changing meaning of the term in American politics nor informs us regarding the deeper underlying motivations of Jewish political behavior.

Once the historically conditioned Jewish sensitivity to survival is understood, many of the puzzling aspects of Jewish political behavior fall into place. There is, for example, the special sensitivity that American Jewry has demonstrated in confronting the root problems of American society. At the turn of the century, many Jews, no less than Progressive reformers and their earlier Republican mugwump precursors, were aroused by the mismanagement of American cities, the abuses of the trusts and the gross inequities left in the wake of the leap from a rural-based agricultural economy to a complex, urban-based, industrial one. American Jews were among the first to fathom the centrality of the problem of race in American society and contributed notably to the political mobilization of the negro community. They were, we have seen, staunch supporters of the notion that government had a role to play in managing the economy to assure a minimum living standard for all. Welfare statism became an important part of the Jewish political agenda and it was Roosevelt's hesitant movement in that direction, rather than his foreign policy, which won the hearts of Jewish voters in the '30s. An urban-based group, they were among the first to recognize the significance of the deterioration of American cities and to propose programs to reverse the trend.

In the area of foreign affairs, the Jewish antennae appear to be even more sensitive. For obvious reasons, American Jewry was among the earliest advocates of using American power to stop Hitler when it might have been possible to do so. They were ardent supporters of strategies for international order as embodied in the concept of the League of Nations and the United Nations. Similarly, the staunchest advocate of protecting minorities in the newly formed nations after World War I, through legal clauses imposed on them and written into their constitutions, was Louis Marshall, the leader of the American Jewish Committee. In the same vein, one of the conceivers of the idea of imposing on war the stigma of illegality, as embodied in 1928 in the somewhat visionary Kellogg-Briand Pact, was Salmon O. Levinson, a Jewish lawyer from Chicago. Poor human material for Cold War hysteria, American Jewry, by and large, concluded relatively early that the Viet Nam intervention was a blunder from which America had somehow to extricate itself. In a word, in both domestic and foreign affairs, American Jewry has acted as a kind of barometer for sensing the crucial problems confronting the nation.

Liberalism, which has been used to identify the Jewish political *gestalt* in America, is, in fact, only an outer and, perhaps, temporary masking. Behind it lies a well-honed survival wisdom which recognizes that there must be ordered change in the domestic, as well as in the international, order lest everything worthwhile be swept away by events whose dyna-

mism is such that they can not be straightjacketed. It is almost as if Jews have instinctively come to understand that deep-seated inequities in the social order, when mobilized by groups seeking change, can spell insecurity and danger for their own group interest. Paradoxically, while Jews are inevitably labeled as liberal, there is, in fact, a deep-seated conservatism in their political complexion, since, more than most groups, they recognize that in the long run there must be room for change in the social order if the system which nurtures them is to survive. That is the reason why they demonstrate an almost patrician concern for the underdog; that is why they do not vote their class interest and why they reject ethnic particularism.

We return finally to the question of the Jewish contribution to American politics. If American Jewry were a normal sub-group we might simply take the measure of how they stood on the crucial issues of the day and draw appropriate conclusions. But, like Jewish communities throughout history, American Jewry cannot claim the dubious distinction of being normal. It is not merely another ethnic or religious or hyphenate community in a nation composed of such groups. Its precise status continues to defy classification. It is, to be sure, shaped by the American society with which it has cast its lot, but it also has, as part of its Jewish connection, a long separate history of its own which shapes its vision. It lives delicately suspended between two cultural pulls, the Jewish and the American. It is that connection to *K'lal Yisrael*, the mysterious tie which binds Jews everywhere together, which largely determines its unique political character. We have seen that it is the lessons of Jewish history which have furnished it with its sensitive antennae and its basic assumptions regarding the social order. It is also that connection which compels American Jewry to exert a special effort to influence American government for help in its mission to nurture the perpetually beleaguered Jewish communities abroad. It is for that reason that the area of foreign policy contains the most discernible signs of a specific Jewish influence.

Throughout American Jewish history, much of American Jewry's financial and organizational resources have been earmarked, not for influencing domestic politics, but to give direct aid and to enlist the influence of the American government for the benefit of coreligionists abroad. Even those major Jewish secular organizations which were originally organized to fulfill a fraternal function, such as B'nai B'rith, the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish War Veterans, ultimately found that much of their work involved improving the condition of Jews elsewhere. Space will not permit a full accounting of these activities, but a mere listing will indicate how extensive they have been.

The earliest manifestation of the American Jewish connection with needy Jewish communities abroad occurred during the colonial and national period when, through the conduit of "messengers," *halukah* was extended to the needy Jews of Palestine. Thereafter, American Jewry was

actively involved in enlisting the aid of the American government during the Damascus Blood Libel (1840) and the Mortara kidnapping case (1858). The latter episode led to the organization of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, the first Jewish secular organization to take responsibility for, among other things, overseas activities. In the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, American Jewry was active on behalf of the Jews of Switzerland, Roumania and various other countries, but it was especially the precarious situation of the Jews in Russia which captured their attention. After the Kishineff pogrom in 1903, the American Jewish Committee was organized to focus foreign and domestic "defense" activities. Its most successful effort, the abrogation of the Commercial Treaty of 1832 with Russia, which was achieved through Congressional resolution, was, on hindsight, a rather hollow victory. It did not ameliorate the condition of Russian Jewry to any measurable extent. World War I marks a kind of watershed for American Jewish diplomatic activity. It led to the organization of the American Jewish Congress, advocating the new concept of Jewish "peoplehood" and heavily imbued with Zionist ideology and goals, and of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which was supposed to be a temporary non-partisan relief organization. It is still in business. The support of the Wilson administration in favor of the Balfour Declaration was won and there was sustained American Jewish input at the Paris Peace Conference, especially in the area of securing civil and ethnic minority rights for the Jewish communities in Poland, Greece and Roumania. At the same time, Zionist organizations continued to be active throughout the '20s and '30s in furthering the goal of an autonomous Jewish community, if not yet a sovereign state, in the Palestine mandate. The litmus test of Jewish influence came during the years of the Holocaust when organized American Jewry tried desperately, but largely unsuccessfully, to wring a more active rescue policy from the Roosevelt administration. They were perhaps slightly more successful in projecting pressure on the Truman administration to recognize the newly created state of Israel in 1948. Since that time, American Jewry has maintained a continuing interest in the state, devoting a sizeable portion of its energy and resources to give it succor.

Yet, even in the area of foreign affairs, where American Jewry has traditionally been compelled to make the most concerted effort to project its influence, the actual impact on official policy is difficult to discern. There are those like John Snetsinger and Stephen Isaacs² who assign

2. Snetsinger (*Truman, The Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel* [Hoover Institution Press, 1974]) sees the Jewish influence projected on a vacillating, politically vulnerable Truman successfully pulling American foreign policy out of its natural, national self-interest grooves in recognizing Israel in 1948. Isaacs (*Jews and American Politics* [Doubleday, 1974]) describes an elaborate policy-influencing apparatus financed by American Jewry, but is more moderate in detailing its actual ability to alter policy.

considerable ability to the community to work its will on decision makers. But their conclusions remain controversial.³ Before 1945, the Jewish voice in American foreign affairs lacked focus and coherence. Rarely could Jews agree on what ought to be done and how best to do it. Throughout the early period the Jewish question never received priority in American policy. The moment that a special plea was presented it triggered countervailing pressure from other ethnic and special interests. Even in the example of the most conspicuous victory—the aforementioned successful abrogation of the commercial treaty with Russia in 1911—Louis Marshall worked through Congress rather than with the policy making executive branch. More typical of the Jewish impact was its failure to move the Roosevelt administration during the Holocaust. One ought not be chagrined or guilty regarding the minimal Jewish impact on policy. The actual parameters of such influence are rather constricted. Irish-Americans and German-Americans, whose communities have larger numbers and whose foreign policy goals in the early decades of the century had a clear and specific focus, were no more successful than were Jews in working their will in the corridors of power. Concealed in the paroxysm of guilt which flooded American Jewry after the Holocaust is a group hubris which encourages Jews to believe that they actually possess the secret power behind the scenes significantly to change major policy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

That reality brings us to the final point regarding the impact of American Jewry on politics. There is a tendency, common to both Jews and their detractors, to assign to the community a power which it does not, in reality, possess. In a sense, both are locked into an “illusion of centrality” which makes too much of Jewish influence. In the case of American Jewry it leads to shouldering responsibilities which they do not have the power to meet and in the case of the anti-Semitic imagination it leads to the fantasy of a secret Jewish conspiracy which is able to manipulate power holders for its own nefarious objectives. The case, of course, is otherwise. The Jewish impact on American domestic and foreign policy, in the rare cases where it is identifiable at all, is peripheral. In the last analysis, it is almost impossible to imagine that American politics would have been startlingly different in its basic outlines had American Jewry not found an alternative Zion in America.

3. See, for example, Zvi Ganin's review of Snetsinger's work in the *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, LXV (September 1975): 94-96.

The Holocaust in American-Jewish Fiction: A Slow Awakening

EDWARD ALEXANDER

Half of his people have been tortured and murdered, and the other half
were giving parties.

Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies*

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AMERICAN POL-
icy towards rescuing Jews from Europe could have been the occasion of a
tragic conflict of loyalties for the American Jewish community. Yehuda
Bauer has succinctly described that policy as follows: "Every hu-
manitarian consideration was dropped, and the slogan 'rescue through
victory' became the statement of official policy. This policy did not take
into account that few Jews would remain to be rescued after victory."¹ The
conflict never occurred: the Jews of Europe were left to be murdered, and
their brethren in the United States, who barely thought of allowing their
Jewish loyalties to "interfere" with the war effort, remained largely undis-
turbed by tragedy or divided loyalties. The long-standing conviction of
the American Jewish community that the best way to ameliorate the
condition of Jews was to ameliorate American society at large was un-
shaken by the experience of the Holocaust.

Not long after the war a generation of American Jewish writers*
arose who purported to satirize every aspect of American Jewish life.
Every American Jewish malady, still more any American malady which
could with any plausibility be labelled Jewish—suffocating maternal af-
fection, suburban vulgarity, materialism, kitchen religion—was mer-
cilessly pilloried. But the fact that the most powerful Jewish community in
the world had abnegated responsibility for its helpless brethren during
their hour of utmost need did not, apart from a few isolated instances,
provoke moral satire. Another malady from which the Jewish satirists
studiously withheld their irony was the Jewish infatuation with leftist
political movements, a delusion, in the words of Cynthia Ozick, "the most
damaging, the most long-range in its destructiveness, since Shabtai Zevi."

1. Yehuda Bauer, Leni Yahil, and Joseph Litvak, "Rescue," in *Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Ke-
ter, 1974), p. 124.

*I include in this group not only American Jewish writers who accept the label calmly but
also those, like Philip Roth, who protest that "I am not a Jewish writer; I am a writer who is a
Jew." I do not include American Yiddish writers or someone like Wiesel who writes in
French. Limitations of space preclude the treatment of poets such as Irving Feldman,
Anthony Hecht, Charles Reznikoff, and Shirley Kaufman (as translator) who have dealt
seriously with the Holocaust.

These two great avoidances were connected with each other in more than an accidental way. It is not the fashion of any satirist to select as his primary subject precisely those moral evasions of which he has himself been guilty or those false idols after which he has himself been lusting. It is a hero and not a clod who declares for himself and his author, Norman Mailer, that " 'the massacres and pogroms, the gas chambers, the lime kilns—all of it touched no one, all of it was lost.' " The imagination of most American Jewish writers was not effectively touched by the Holocaust either during its occurrence or for over two decades afterward (this despite the fact that detailed information about the massacres was available to those who could read newspapers from December 1942). One of Saul Bellow's characters in his 1944 novel, *Dangling Man*, provides the exception which tests the rule. Awaiting induction into the army, the hero, Joseph, dreams that he is in a low chamber surrounded by rows of murdered people, one of whom he has been charged with identifying and reclaiming. His charnel-house guide reads from an identity tag a place name which reminds Joseph that "in Bucharest . . . those slain by the Iron Guard were slung from hooks in a slaughterhouse. I have seen the pictures." In horror, he jumps back "in the clear," and claims that "I was not personally acquainted with the deceased. I had merely been asked, as an outsider." He wonders why he and his friends have so easily accustomed themselves to the slaughter in Europe and why they have so little pity for the victims. But his answer does not venture beyond the most charitable of explanations: "I do not like to think what we are governed by. I do not like to think about it. It is not easy work, and it is not safe. Its kindest revelation is that our senses and our imaginations are somehow incompetent."

The causative link which, in my view, exists between the absence of the Holocaust and the absence of satire of the American Jew's love of leftist humanitarianism from American Jewish fiction is also hinted at in this literally exceptional novel. The eventual induction of Bellow's hero into the army not only takes him away from the dream-world of American freedom back to the European world of limited choice and unlimited bloodshed; it also forces him to give up his scholarly work on the Enlightenment. In fact, however, his fascination with this subject has already begun to wane, for reasons that are evident in his explanation of why he quit the Communist Party:

"You see, I thought those people were different. I haven't forgotten that I believed they were devoted to the service of some grand flap-doodle, the Race, *le genre humain*. Oh, yes, they were! By the time I got out, I realized that any hospital nurse did more with one bedpan for *le genre humain* than they did with their entire organization. It's odd to think that there was a time when to hear that would have filled me with horror."

The Enlightenment and the French Revolution granted Jews equal rights simply because they belonged to *le genre humain*. Despite the unceasing Jew-hatred of the Enlightenment, no group believed more fer-

vently than the Jews that the Christian Trinity had been supplanted as a motive force in the European mind by the new Trinity of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The revolutionists would grant everything to the Jews as individuals, but nothing to them as a people or a distinct group. Jews impressed by the new dispensation came to believe that they must relinquish their nationality in order to assimilate with "humanity." They were not noticeably disturbed by the fact that in practice their assimilation was not with all humanity but with the particular people among whom they lived. Thus, while the people Israel was rapidly improving itself out of existence, the other peoples—the French, the Poles, the Germans—were asserting their national rights more boldly than ever.

But no conviction has ever been more resistant to negative evidence than the belief of the Jewish leftist in the promises held out to him by declarations of human rights. The leftist-inspired pogroms in Russia in the 1880s and in 1905; the espousal by every left-wing party in nineteenth-century France of anti-Semitism; the Dreyfus Affair; the refusal of the German Socialists to condemn anti-Semitism during the 1930s; the destruction of European Jewry amidst world-wide indifference: such an accumulation of horrors might have been thought finally destructive of the delusory belief in emancipation, equality, assimilation, and enlightenment. A non-Jewish observer like François Mauriac, when he witnessed trainloads of Jewish children standing at Austerlitz station in Paris awaiting deportation to the death camps, knew that

the dream which Western man conceived in the eighteenth century, whose dawn he thought he saw in 1789, and which . . . had grown stronger with the progress of enlightenment and the discoveries of science—this dream vanished finally . . . before those trainloads of little children.²

But the faith of the Jewish universalist has proved more immune to the evidence of mere experience than that of the French Catholic; and everything we know of Jewish life in our own country shows that this faith has survived the Holocaust itself.

The persistence of the universalist-humanist delusion among American Jews even in the wake of the Holocaust is nowhere represented with more symbolic force than in Bernard Malamud's story, "The Lady of the Lake" (1958), one of but two in his work dealing directly with the Holocaust. The protagonist comes into a small inheritance and decides to go abroad "seeking romance." In the States, where "a man's past was . . . expendable," he was Henry Levin, but once in Europe Levin takes to calling himself Henry Freeman, thus symbolically severing his Jewish ties. When he meets an attractive Italian girl named Isabella he identifies himself as an American but denies his Jewish identity. He wonders, since "he absolutely did not look Jewish," why she should ask the question of him, but quickly dismisses it as a quirk. "With ancient history why bother?"

2. Introduction to *Elie Wiesel: Night* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p. 7.

One of her attractions, to be sure, is precisely a face which carries "the mark of history," that is, of "civilized" Italian history. But at the crucial moment, when he comes to propose marriage to Isabella, she reveals her breasts, on whose "soft and tender flesh" he recognizes the tattooed blue numbers of the concentration-camp inmate that show her Jewish identity. "I can't marry you. We are Jews. My past is meaningful to me. I treasure what I suffered for." Levin-Freeman suddenly discovers the emptiness of his freedom and, having deprived himself by his deception of what he most desired, can only stammer, "Listen, I-I am—" But before he can supply the missing label, Isabella disappears into the night. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, it is not enough for the American Jew simply to be an American, or even simply "to be." To embrace the fullness of life that Isabella here represents, he must embrace the particularity of his Jewish identity, an identity which is forevermore inseparable from the experience of the Holocaust.

Levin-Freeman is symbolic not only of the American Jew who has evaded his moral responsibility and impoverished his life by cutting himself off from the Jewish past. He may also be taken as a symbol of the American Jewish writer who, in embracing what Cynthia Ozick has called the "Diaspora of freedom," has doomed himself to the obscurity of a perpetual involvement "with shadow, with futility, with vanity, frivolity, and waste."³ He has denied the novelist's responsibility to engage and extend his readers' imaginative sympathy, and he has impoverished his own art by separating his Jewish characters from their history, which could have provided him with that norm of behavior without which satire becomes sterile.

Thus, the "silence" of most American Jewish writers on the Holocaust was not (as has sometimes been urged in their defense) an awed acknowledgement of the unspeakable and unimaginable character of the evil which occurred, or the implicit admission that what is absolutely unprecedented in human affairs cannot be imitated in a literary action. American Jewish writers have hardly been struck dumb in the face of various evils which (however mistakenly) they consider on a par with Auschwitz and Treblinka. Carlyle once spoke of the unique eloquence of "the SILENCE of deep Eternities, of Worlds from beyond the morning-stars." But the long silence of American Jewish literature on the Holocaust was eloquent only of its own failure to shake off the incubus-like ideological superstitions of modern Jewry and to grasp its proper subject—even though to do so would have been to admit that Jewish suffering had not been merely an indiscriminate part of man's inhumanity to man, but unique, and that the human rights granted to Jews as "freemen" and individuals had been an invitation to self-destruction. As Norma Rosen recently wrote,

3. "America: Toward Yavneh," *JUDAISM*, XIX (Summer 1970): 267.

The Holocaust is the central occurrence of the Twentieth century. It is the central human occurrence. It cannot therefore be more so for Jews and Jewish writers. But it ought, at least, to be that.⁴

Among the best-known American Jewish writers, with the exception (again) of Saul Bellow, this silence has even today not been broken. But if we now turn from speculation about why we have not had, in America, a substantial literature of the Holocaust to evaluation of what we do have, we will notice a gradual awakening in our literary culture that seems to have been spurred by the Eichmann trial and the Six-Day War. Since the '60s a number of American Jewish writers, including some of the most gifted, have sought to rediscover for us in the Holocaust our own buried life.

We still frequently notice, in this literature, the deep-seated reluctance to conceive of specifically Jewish suffering, as well as a compulsive desire for discovering analogies between Jewish suffering and that of whatever oppressed and allegedly oppressed group (not excluding the Arabs) is at the time of writing the special beneficiary of liberal-left benevolence. The most hideous example of this tendency is probably Richard Elman's pseudo-documentary novel, *The 28th Day of Elul* (1967). Its hero is a survivor who writes from Israel to the lawyer of a deceased American uncle to prove that he is truly a Jew and, therefore, deserving of his uncle's legacy. By way of explaining to the lawyer what Hitler's victims endured, the best he can do is to say "they were treated like niggers." The worst he can think to say of the German murderers themselves is that they are like Americans, who are "just as guilty" because they dropped bombs on Hamburg and Dresden—or like (to this point does egalitarian nihilism invariably lead us) Israeli army officers. The German organizers of mass killing were, according to the moral and historical perspective of this writer who is all knowingness and no knowledge, just like bourgeois functionaries everywhere. "We even have them in Israel . . . with patches over their eyes."

Even in works infinitely superior to Elman's in literary tact and moral imagination, we often encounter the desire to relate the Holocaust to what is readily available in the experience of the author and his imagined audience. In Edward Wallant's *The Pawnbroker* (1962), the hero is Sol Nazerman, who lost his wife and children during the Holocaust and himself suffered mutilation through medical experimentation. Formerly a professor in Poland, in his American incarnation he is a pawnbroker whose shop exists to subserve the interests of a Mafia gangster. He believes that all life has been gassed and burned in those crematoria where he had himself been forced to work. His greatest wish is to be free of human relationships beyond the formal ones required by his home life with the shallow, assimilated "American" family of his sister, and by his

4. "The Holocaust and the American Jewish Novelist," *Midstream*, XX (October 1974): 57.

business transactions with the derelicts who frequent his shop. He resents the attempted intrusion upon his privacy and unfeelingness by a well-intentioned social worker, Miss Birchfield. His true life is among the dead, and comes to him in dreams of his murdered family and people. Wallant conveys very powerfully the spiritual distance which separates Nazerman from his mindless relatives, his hostile black and Puerto Rican customers, and the woman who loves him yet wishes that the blue numbers on his arm and the memories which they represent, would disappear altogether. " 'There is,' he tells Miss Birchfield, 'a world so different in scale that its emotions bear no resemblance to yours; it has emotions so different in degree that they have become a different species!'"

Finally, however, Wallant proves as unwilling to accept this wall of separation and distinction as the naively well-intentioned social worker who hopes to "cure" him of his "bitterness." Sol has refused emotional relationship not only with her, but, also, with his black Puerto Rican assistant, Jesus, who emulates Sol in what he takes to be the peculiarly Jewish magical power of pawnbrokerism. It is only when he can be made to suffer for Jesus that Sol's icy encasement will melt away, that his rehabilitation will be possible, and that his own suffering will be subsumed within the general suffering of humanity. The curative process begins when he discovers that his Mafia employer also runs the house of prostitution where one of his black customers works, and he remembers the sexual enslavement of his wife by the Gestapo. Heavy symbolic operations now come into play, all of them intended to validate Jewish suffering by linking it with Christian symbolism and the plight of dark-skinned Americans. Jesus, who conspires with a gang of black hoodlums to rob the shop, suddenly begins to see Sol Nazerman, a possible-though not intended-casualty of the robbery, as Jesus Christ crucified, "his arm with the blue numbers stretched out to the transfixed hand." The old literary-psychological device of the "double" asserts the interdependent existence of the Jewish and the Puerto Rican Jesus. In the robbery, it is Jesus Ortiz who literally "dies for" Sol Nazerman by stepping in the line of a bullet. With his death, Sol's long dead emotions burst into life. The symbolism is ponderous, precisely because it works to conceal rather than reveal the true meaning of events. What has truly been sacrificed is not Jesus Ortiz, but the uniqueness of Sol's memories and of the Jewish people's suffering. In his final dream, Sol walks over the desolate grounds of the death camp, "monument to a forgotten race." He meets an SS officer who turns out to be the Mafia gangster, and informs Sol that " 'Your dead are not buried here.' " The tears which signify Sol's return to life are at first mysterious to him, "until he realized he was crying for all his dead now, that all the dammed-up weeping had been released by the loss of one irreplaceable Negro who had been his assistant and who had tried to kill him but who had ended by saving him." The dilution of the Jewish literary imagination brings even a fine writer like Wallant to the point where the Jews are asked

not merely to give up their lives for the benefit of downtrodden minorities but to give up their deaths as well.

Touching Evil (1969), by Norma Rosen, is a novel whose reach far exceeds its grasp. It tries to imagine how Americans, specifically non-Jewish American women, who have been touched by the evil of the Holocaust, might try to think and feel and imagine their way into the lives of those who had been tortured and killed. The two crucial dates of the story are 1944, when the older of the two women central to the story, having been shown photographs of the death camps at the very moment when she is being seduced, vows she “‘will never marry or have children,’” and 1961, when the younger woman, Hattie, dutifully follows the Eichmann trial on television during her pregnancy. She, too, has misgivings about propagating the species because, in her view, the Germans have poisoned the very process of generation. But her burgeoning into motherhood is vital to her spiritual existence because it is the path by which she enters into the lives of those whose blood will otherwise be covered by the earth. She suspends her personal rhythms of existence and identifies herself with those

far-gone pregnant women in their forced march; the woman giving birth in the typhus-lice-infested straw; the woman who was shot but did not die, and who dug her way from under a mountain of corpses that spouted blood. . . .

Unfortunately, Mrs. Rosen has not pursued this striking central idea with sufficient concentration. She, too, allows herself to be diverted by the temptations of analogy, of showy symbolism, and feminist faddishness. In fact, the book concludes with the older woman “looking for Jesus,” who, like Wallant’s character of the same name, is a Puerto Rican misled by his evil friends into criminal actions, and aspiring to take him in as Hattie has taken in the pregnant Jewish women of the Holocaust during the process of childbirth. Even the crucial scenes in which the hysterical Hattie compares the labor room of a N.Y. hospital to a concentration camp are so enveloped in feminist rhetoric that many a reader (especially today) will forget that their point (as Mrs. Rosen herself has felt obliged to explain⁵) is to finalize the identification between Hattie and the women whose stories she has heard in the Eichmann trial, not to present women as the oppressed race.

Daring, even brilliant, as is the central idea of *Touching Evil*, it would have been far more daring if Mrs. Rosen had made the heroine who seeks to identify with the Jewish victims of Hitler through the shared burden of motherhood a Jew herself. For in no respect has the refusal of most American Jewish writers to allow their awareness of Jewish history and of the Holocaust to impinge on their depiction of American Jewish life

5. Ibid., p. 59.

shown itself so glaringly as in their relentless attack upon "the Jewish mother." This well-known monster of American fiction, who suffocates her offspring with egoism parading as affection, was created not merely in wilful ignorance of what Singer calls "the generations-old dolor of the Jewish mother . . . who bled and suffered so that murderers should have victims of their knives," but with a stolid, almost stupid refusal to consider that the paralyzing dilemmas faced by hundreds of thousands of Jewish mothers in Hitler's Europe might have touched the consciousness and affected the behavior of at least a few of their American counterparts.

Just how great was the failure of awareness, how monstrous the thoughtlessness, of the Jewish writers who invented this caricature should be evident to anyone who reads *Anya* (1974), by Susan F. Schaeffer. The extraordinary achievement of this novel, probably the best American literary work on the Holocaust, cannot be conveyed by a description of just one of its themes; but nowhere is its special power to convey the enormity of Jewish suffering during the destruction process more evident than in its depiction of the agony of Jewish mothers. Susan Schaeffer has given to all those nameless and unremembered women who were forced to choose between life and a mother's loyalty to her child, or—more horrible yet—between the relatively "easy" death of the gas chamber and that death in the burning pit which she would share with her child if she did not abandon him, "a monument and a memorial."

Anya is a historical novel in the form of a memoir written by Anya Savikin some years after she is brought to New York from the DP camps. She tells, with a wealth of detail that is part of the novel's meaning, of the life of her wealthy, assimilated family in Poland before the war, of the arrest, torture, and murder of her father, sister, brothers, husband, and, finally, mother; of her own suffering in the camps, and of her miraculous escapes and survival, made possible by her determination to save her daughter. Anya tells us that her great wish had always been to be taken over by "the continuity of life": to marry, to bear children, to accumulate the physical record of family memory in pictures and furniture and jewelry; then, at the last, to die a normal death. Perhaps no writer since Hardy (as poet) has expressed so well as Schaeffer the paradoxical way in which material possessions form the texture of a life, and make us human. "Then I started to picture the stove. It seemed very important that I remember every detail, as if all our lives depended on it." That massive infusion of the details of everyday life which has characterized the realistic novel since Thackeray finds in this novel its true justification. By conveying so richly the fullness of an individual life, Schaeffer, without more than glancing at the dimensions of the Holocaust, makes us see how far beyond imagining is the loss of six million lives, each of them a treasure house of association and memory.

When she has lost almost everything and everyone, Anya must be taught by her mother how and why to survive. Mrs. Savikin, a splendid

character who both understands and embodies the naturalness of custom, insists that even in the Vilna ghetto her daughter must comb and wash and put on lipstick if she wants to retain the human image and survive. When the ghetto is being liquidated, the order goes out that all women with children are to be killed. "Some of the women heard it and ran away from their children. 'How could they do it?' I asked Momma. 'Everything for life,' she answered dully; 'everything to live.'" Then Anya and her mother are sent in opposite directions at the segregation point, the younger to live, for awhile, the older to die at once. Anya tries to stay with her mother, but to no avail; and the last words of the mother whom she will never see again are: " 'You will live! You have someone for whom to live!' " This is her way of reminding Anya of what she has already taught her by example: that the continuity of life for which she had hoped now resides in the daughter, Ninka, who has been hidden with a Christian family. The little girl has become the repository of all those destroyed lives. " 'She is the photograph album,' I thought, seeing myself turn the pages with Momushka."

In the United States, at the end of her long odyssey, Anya reflects (virtually for the first time) on the meaning of all that has happened, to her and to the Jewish people. She has been disappointed in her unloving daughter. Yet when Anya recalls two women survivors living in California who had saved themselves by hiding when Gestapo officers held up their children and asked for the mothers, she cannot understand (though she does not condemn) mothers who could leave their children. Moreover, when she says that "I cannot even leave my living child alone for one second," Susan Schaeffer does not invite us to sneer.

The author of *Anya* shows herself as shrewd an observer of American life as she is a magical recreator of a life she never knew when she makes her protagonist begin to think of the Holocaust as an event of specifically Jewish significance only at the time of the Six-Day War. Anya thinks vaguely about the relationship between the Holocaust and Israel—to which her own way had been blocked by the NKVD—but does not get beyond the feeling that perhaps the destruction of European Jewry was "a payment for our new country, for Israel." A much more intellectual survivor of the Holocaust, Artur Sammler of Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970), is not notably more successful in articulating the relation between these two central events of modern Jewish history. But that a hero of a Bellow novel should be committed even to the attempt is some measure of how far American Jewish literature had come in the quarter century since 1944 when the narrator of *Dangling Man* felt himself at the farthest imaginative as well as physical remove from the European victims of murder. In 1967 it was immediately evident to Sammler and to his creator (who went to Israel as a reporter) that "for the second time in twenty-five years the same people were threatened by extermination."

Sammler, a 72-year-old survivor of the death camps, in which he lost

his wife, has not been a Zionist or much of a Jew either. Yet, when the war breaks out, he feels keenly the anomaly and absurdity of being in New York while the drama of modern Jewish history is being played out in Israel. He "could not sit in New York reading the world press" as many American Jews had done while a third of their brethren were being removed from the face of the earth. Therefore, he gets himself an assignment as a journalist so that he may not be relegated to what seems the historical irrelevance of Jewish America, and so that he may be *there*, in Israel, "to send reports, to do something, perhaps to die in the massacre." The sense that an adequate response to the fact of the Holocaust must involve some kind of identification with Israel is strong, and yet the picture of Sammler in Israel has about it something of the faintly ridiculous which often attaches to the American Jew on "emergency mission" to Israel—"At the age of seventy-two on battlegrounds, wearing these shoes and a seersucker jacket and soiled white cap from Kresge's. Tankmen spotted him as an American. . . ."

For the most part, American Jewish literature has not been able to imagine a communal response to the Holocaust that does not consist of the answer "Israel." An exception, of course, would have to be made for the American-Yiddish writers, whose belief that the continuation of Yiddish, the language of the majority of Holocaust victims, can itself be a salvation, has been lovingly, if ironically, described in Cynthia Ozick's wonderful story "Envy; or, Yiddish in America" (1969). But within American Jewish writing in the strict sense the only attempt to imagine a collective response to the Holocaust is Arthur A. Cohen's *In the Days of Simon Stern* (1973). This novel, garrulous, pedantic, and badly structured, is, nevertheless, rich in idea and imaginative power, and unique among the works we have surveyed in viewing the Holocaust from the perspective of Jewish religion.

The narrator, blind Nathan Gaza (an obvious reference to the prophet of Sabbatai Zevi), a survivor of Auschwitz, tells the story of Simon Stern, whose parents were informed, before his birth in 1899, that their son would be the Messiah. Simon does not learn of his identity until much later, in fact, at the very time that he learns from the modern Elijah, Chaim Weizmann, in his Madison Square Garden speech of 1943, that two million Jews have already been killed, amidst "a conspiracy of silence." Up to this time Simon's messianic energies have gone into the accumulation of sixty million dollars' worth of real-estate. But the simultaneous revelation of his messianic destiny and of the destruction of the Jews of Europe raises the question of whether "the time of beating wings" has arrived. Simon's subsequent action underscores the accusation (made by Hilberg and others) that in the midst of the slaughter American Jews thought, when they thought at all, not of political action to effect rescue but of post-war salvage operations. Stern endows a Society for the Rescue and Resurrection of the Jews, which will dedicate itself, when the war

ends, to the spiritual restoration of the remnant. He envisions "a small Bene Brak as in the days after the destruction of the ancient Temple," a Bene Brak in New York City which will bear witness that "despite all, everything, Jews will endure."

In due course the Society is established, and the task of giving a semblance of civility to a community of survivors of bestiality is engaged with energy. Simon is proclaimed Messiah at a meeting of the Society, and the "endurers" begin to rebuild a Temple replica as well as to regain the pride, courage, and tenacity of the Jews who built the original. But from this high point all is decline and dissolution: we have had no more than what Nathan calls "a fulfilled moment." The same may be said of the novel itself. Yet, both sociologically and theologically,⁶ it breaks new ground in the treatment of the Holocaust in American Jewish writing. It forces us to look back at the conduct of American Jewry and of Jewry's favorite Senators and President during the Holocaust and to ask whether, in Simon's words, "the murderers are . . . the ones who do not pay attention." It also explores, with more audacity than perhaps any work except Moshe Flinker's diary and Nelly Sachs' poetry, the bearing of the Holocaust upon the ancient Jewish idea that messianic redemption will come through historical catastrophe. Above all, it suggests a new future for American Jewish writing by opening the question of how to reorganize Judaism in the Diaspora after the European Diaspora has been destroyed. If, as Matthew Arnold believed, criticism can spur the creation of a new literature, then Cohen's novel may be thought of as a response to Cynthia Ozick's call in 1970⁷ for American Jewish culture to assume, alongside Israeli Jewish culture, responsibility for the reconstruction of Jewish life.

The Holocaust has, then, finally become a subject of American Jewish fiction, finally made itself felt as an event of Jewish history and significance. This ought to be a cause of satisfaction, even if it is a strange satisfaction that comes from assimilating to the imagination a catastrophe that befell us over three decades ago. But, alas, we have no time to enjoy even this qualified satisfaction, for the Jews do not seem able to extricate themselves from the storm-center of modern history. If world events and American policy continue on their present course, American Jews may once again find themselves faced with a tragic choice between their identity as members of the Jewish People and their identity as American citizens. If our writers have at last begun to equip us for tragedy, they will at least have saved us from the worst calamity.

6. On this point, see Alvin Rosenfeld's important review in *Midstream*, XIX (August/September 1973): 72-75.

7. In "America: Toward Yavneh," p. 279. For more general comment on Cynthia Ozick's relation to the new school of American Jewish writers, see William Novak, "After the Schlemiel: American Jewish Literature Today," *Moment*, I (December 1975): 73.

Chaim Grade and the Jewish Ego

MOSHE MOSKOWITZ

IN A RECENT REVIEW IN THIS JOURNAL OF THE novel, *The Agunah*, by the distinguished Yiddish author, Chaim Grade, the reviewer notes Grade's psychological acumen and his "brief but penetrating analysis" of human character.¹ It is the intent of this article to expand upon the latter point, not only with regard to *The Agunah*, but with regard to other important works by this author, and to show that the psychological view is indeed one of the most remarkable and interesting features of Grade's work.

In terms of the human psyche, the ego occupies a vital but precarious position. It is not only that portion of the psyche closest to the external world which must present an accurate reflection of reality to man's inner world, but it must rule in this inner world as well. It is, thus, engaged in a fierce struggle to master the task of harmonizing, balancing, and binding the various divergent forces and influences in the human psyche into a unified, functioning mental system.² An unusual imbalance of these divergent inner forces might, however, severely tax the integrative abilities of the ego. The result could then be anxiety, illness, or an abnormal personality. The latter might occur if, for instance, the moral conscience were to overwhelm the ego and gain undue control of the personality.³

Inner equilibrium and harmony are, thus, key concepts in psychoanalytical theory and treatment. Interestingly enough, rabbinic Judaism has long posited the same concepts as the model for right conduct between man and God and between man and himself. Though the maintenance of a high religious and moral standard was a primary consideration, nevertheless there was the general halakhic rule that "no ordinance is to be laid on the people unless the majority of the people are able to bear it."⁴ This would seem to imply a rabbinic recognition that burdening a man's moral conscience too greatly could be as dangerous and injurious as permitting too much moral laxity. Since man had been created "in God's image," and God Himself was the perfect harmony, it was best to nurture a proper psychic balance. Thus, although the rabbis, in no uncertain terms,⁵ condemned man's evil *yezer*, a rough equivalent of the Freudian

1. Lester Segal, "Eastern European Jewry Revisited: The Novel as Social Commentary," JUDAISM, 24:3 (Summer, 1975): 380.

2. Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1964), pp. 75 ff.

3. Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-analytic Work," in *On Creativity and the Unconscious: Papers on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 89 ff.

4. *Baba Batra* 60b; cf. I. H. Weiss, *Dor ve-Dorshav* (Vienna, 1876), Vol. II, pp. 53-71; R. Travers Herford, *Talmud & Apocrypha* (New York: KTAV, 1971), p. 120.

5. *Bereshit Rabbah* 34:10; 27:4; *Kiddushin* 30b; *Sukkot* 52b.

id, some, nevertheless, correctly identified it as the source of vital and necessary libido: "Yes, for if it were not for the evil *yezer* man would not build a house, or take a wife, or beget a child, or engage in business. . . ." ⁶ As Gordis has correctly noted, "The classic Jewish tradition . . . regards the sexual impulse not as innately evil, but as natural, with proclivities for good and for ill, and, therefore, to be treated without prejudice." ⁷ In the words of Yehuda Halevi, the Divine law desired that "we should keep the balance and grant every mental and physical faculty its due." ⁸

It is, therefore, most interesting to note that in the major prose works of one of the last remaining great Yiddish writers, Chaim Grade, a central place is occupied by just this question of balance between desire and conscience. More specifically, in such works as *The Agunah* and *Tsemah Atlas*, the question is that of the proper human and Jewish response to man's incessant yearning for the forbidden.

According to Jewish law, an *agunah* is a wife who has failed to provide satisfactory evidence of her husband's death. Hence, she is still legally *agunah*, i.e., *anchored* to her husband, and cannot remarry. Although the great rabbis of the past formulated such a decree in order to make it difficult for a wife to shed her husband for puerile reasons, and hoped thus to avoid moral remission, the law did, in certain instances, bring undue hardship and suffering to many innocent and well-meaning women. Such is the predicament of the protagonist of *The Agunah*. Having lost her husband in a war, with no survivors to certify to his death, she finds herself in a Kafkaesque *agunahtic* bind, where she has no recourse other than adultery in order to satisfy her natural instincts. Rather than acquiesce to such a recourse, however, she seeks and receives a special dispensation from a saintly rabbi. This dispensation in itself brings with it such woeful complications that Merl, the protagonist, commits suicide.

Such a bare outline says nothing, of course, of the profound psychological complexity of the work, enmeshed as it is within the framework of a panoramic view of East European Jewish religious life and customs. Yet, the psychological richness of the work derives not only from the fact that the *agunah* and all those involved with her struggle to satisfy the normal societal drives of marriage, family, and livelihood, but because they are driven by something reaching downward and backward, something which, in its turn, evokes a counter-force that maims and destroys.

Grade conjoins his characters in a parallelistic maze of secretive and suggestive cravings and exacting self-punishment. Thus, the *agunah* herself, badgered by her family into a marriage with a faithful but weak

6. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:7. Cf. Richard Rubenstein, *The Religious Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 153.

7. Robert Gordis, "The Two Faces of Freud," *JUDAISM*, 24:2 (Spring, 1975): 197.

8. *Jehuda Halevi*, ed. Isaak Heinemann (Oxford: Philosophica Judaica, East and West Library, 1947), p. 79.

cemetery cantor, falls in love with the rabbi from whom she seeks permission to remarry:

"True, true," Merl whispered, unsure if she was assenting to the rabbi's order not to meddle or to his wife's remark. For a moment she gazed at him with sadness and mute admiration. Suddenly she shivered and backed away from him, lest she fall at his feet.⁹

At another point she states, "If he were alone and she single, she would gladly have become Reb David's housemaid."¹⁰ On the other hand, the rabbi is as troubled by his feelings for the woman as she is about her feelings for him:

Reb David's eyes glowed with fear, amazement, and suspicion. Even after the seamstress had gone, he stood with his hands clasping the pulpit behind him, as though forcibly restraining himself from running after her.¹¹

Of course, any relationship between the "housemaid" and the rabbi, other than "platonic," is unthinkable:

Reb David tore himself away from the pulpit, ran up the steps that led to the Holy Ark, and wiped his eyes as if wiping away the image of the married woman. And as though still afraid that the seamstress had remained in some dark corner of his thoughts, he switched on one lamp after another until the shul was bright with light like on the night of Yom Kippur. Merl, outside, suddenly saw the courtyard and a part of the street up to the Zaretche market sown with rays of light, as though windows of the shul were showing her how to return to her house and to her husband.¹²

Parallel to this undercurrent of forbidden feelings is the relationship between the stern and tortured Reb Levi, officially designated to rule on matters pertaining to *agunot*, and his daughter, Tsirele. Since Reb Levi adheres strictly to the letter of the Jewish law, he has refused Merl permission to remarry, thus driving her into an impossible involvement with Reb David. Yet Reb Levi's stringency affects not only Merl. It also affects his daughter and, possibly, his wife. As far as the latter is concerned, there is no direct evidence, for Reb Levi claims to have noticed a certain "portentous" look in his bride's eyes for some time before her committal to the insane asylum. With regard to his daughter, however, there is no doubt of the effect of this sternness; there is even an allusion to its cause:

So why then had he been so fearful that his only child would become promiscuous. . . . Because he had been afraid that his daughter might inherit his character. He was afraid that she might stumble just because she was his daughter. And perhaps his zealousness stemmed from a fear of his own secret desires.¹³

In a hauntingly delicate scene between father and daughter, Grade reveals the inevitable Oedipal twist, i.e., the deliberate, conscious avoid-

9. Chaim Grade, *The Agunah*, trans. Curt Leviant (New York & Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1974), p. 115.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

ance of the forbidden act unwittingly transmuted into its unconscious manifestation. Fearing for his daughter's possible promiscuity, Reb Levi has kept her from education and friends. This doubtful but deliberate isolation has, of course, only served to keep her closer to him:

"Papa, why don't you recite Havdala?" Reb Levi heard a soft voice. He jumped up as though his chair were on fire. God be praised! Tsirele stood before him, fully clothed.
 "My child, would you like to hold the Havdala candle?"
 "Yes, papa," she said. By the dark blue light streaming into the window he saw her small, pale face illumined with a childlike smile, tranquil, delicate and modest.¹⁴

Psychoanalysis indicates that when the libido is deprived of the possibility of an ideal satisfaction consistent with one's ego, it may begin to pursue paths and aims which the ego despises, thus creating a pathogenic conflict.¹⁵ Tsirele's illness manifests itself in an act symbolizing and demonstrating just what her father had wished to avoid:

Reb Levi looked out the dark blue window, as though waiting for the starry sky to reply. Perhaps it was punishment for being a strict zealot all his life. Hence the divine omen to show him what he himself had wrought—a daughter who wanted to run out of her father's house naked.¹⁶

Both the phallic significance of the candle and the traditional implications of nakedness¹⁷ evince Grade's brilliant method of fusing psychological insight with intensity of characterization, a combination ultimately set within the fabric of a sweeping Yiddish prose.

Merl, as well, has been impeded in her search for healthy and normal satisfaction. Though she has remained faithful to her first husband for fifteen years after his disappearance, she nevertheless admits that he never truly satisfied her. Certainly, her present "squirrely" husband leaves much to be desired, and her path to the man whom she truly loves and admires is blocked. Such a situation cannot help being potentially explosive and, utilizing once again the theme of covering and uncovering nakedness, Grade thus depicts Merl's inner turmoil:

. . . Merl heard the storm raging against the walls of her apartment, like waves crashing against sea boulders. It seemed that the storm was an enormous frenzied monster, some kind of destructive demon with a will of its own. It wanted to smash her windows and drag her naked out of the house, through the gardens, over the lake, to the mountain near the forest settlement where she had spent the summers of her youth—and cast her down to earth there and cover her with pine needles, moss and rotted leaves.¹⁸

In the case of both the *agunah* and Reb Levi's daughter, a "divine

14. Ibid., p. 97.

15. Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types . . .," *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

16. Chaim Grade, *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

17. The Hebrew term for incest is *ervah*, "nakedness" (*Hagigah* 1:7); to commit incest is *legalot ervah*, "to uncover nakedness" (Leviticus 18:6-19).

18. Chaim Grade, *Op. cit.*, p. 197. An example of a filial rape fantasy. It is to be noted, however, that at its conclusion the father returns her to the mother, i.e., the mountain where she dies in expiation for her sin, as she indeed does in the story.

omen" and nature combine to illustrate that the human character cannot escape its own predilection. Furthermore, in an attempt to aid Reb David, the *agunah* is ready to offer herself to another father-figure, the disgusting, but influential, Moishe Tsirulnik. Though she indulges in what might be considered foreplay, the thought of actually consummating the sex act with this person is so repugnant to her that she smashes his head and then runs insanely to the forest to hang herself. Having thus brought herself to the brink of the unthinkable, and being unable to rid herself of her feelings for Reb David, the poor woman destroys herself.

This theme of yearning for the forbidden, whether as a result of a regression from a previous frustration, or as an ever-smoldering trait of the human character, is also highly developed in Grade's major two-volume novel, *Tsemah Atlas*. Here one finds an even broader view of East European Jewish life than in *The Agunah*. There are a greater number of characters, plots, and subplots. The central character, Tsemah Atlas, a brooding moralist, leaves his teaching post at a yeshivah and his function as a traveling *Musarist* missionary, and marries an attractive young woman from a wealthy family. This occurs after he betrays a less attractive girl because of a dubious dowry, a betrayal which preys on his mind throughout the novel. Ultimately, the marriage turns sour because of Atlas' provocative behavior with his merchant in-laws, and because of a visit by two yeshivah students who remind Atlas of his previous dedication to the "moral" way of life, a way of life that precludes material well being and a reasonable attitude toward others. Tsemah attempts to return to his role as a preacher of morality, but, consumed by guilt and doubts, he continues to antagonize others and succeeds only in isolating himself from the Jewish community.

In *Tsemah Atlas* there is, as well, a complex web of figures and feelings that act and react upon each other within the circumferential conflict of desire and conscience. In this case, the protagonist turns away from those normal relationships which might offer him comfort and moderate happiness¹⁹ and longs, instead, for a young married woman whose husband is gallivanting about Europe having affairs. His own wife, who conceivably could have made him happy, is herself under the "spell" of the forbidden. Not content with carrying on a fruitless illicit relationship with a married schoolteacher, she marries Tsemah despite, or perhaps because of, his cold manner, and then flirts with his students.

"I also love the forbidden," she declares at one point.²⁰ However,

19. One may suspect the same of Merl, the *agunah*, although outward events would seem to contradict this. Nevertheless, she expresses dissatisfaction with both her first husband and the cantor and yearns instead for that which she cannot, and may not, possess.

20. Chaim Grade, *Tsemah Atlas* (New York: Cyco Bicher Farlag, 1967), Vol. I, p. 106. It is to be hoped that Curt Leviant, the very capable translator of *The Agunah*, will one day grace the English-reading public with a translation of *Tsemah Atlas* as well. Until that day, however, this writer's translation will have to suffice.

when her husband evinces the normal masculine instinct toward her, she turns from him in loathing:

. . . Now she saw he hadn't changed. His face was trembling with desire and anger. He was furious with himself for wanting her. But she, too, was consumed with anger. At this very moment she hated him for his crude masculine needs, for his beard and sidelocks, for his creased brows, his dark glance. . . .²¹

At another point she seems to seek the answer to this unfortunate compulsive dialectic of love-and-loathing, the lure of the prohibited-hence-fascinating, deep within herself: "Why, indeed, was she drawn to Tsemah? . . . Was her character so weak and perverse that she could only love a hard, unyielding man who berated her?"²²

Grade's characters, thus, seem to be dimly aware of being propelled toward that which both tradition and conscience proscribe, yet they cannot help themselves. When a conscious effort is made, as is the case with Tsemah and as was the case with the *agunah*, to block actual consummation of the prohibited act, there is enough of a residue of desire left to damn the individuals for the rest of their lives. Though the actions of Tsemah and his wife are not as extreme as those of the *agunah*, they are, nevertheless, designed to provoke punishment and misery. Thus, Tsemah wanders about seeking castigation for his "evil nature," while his wife refuses to accept a divorce, making her, in effect, another *agunah*.

It is to be noted that Tsemah's wife plays the role of a seductive mother with his students, while he, himself, is regarded as both father and sexual object by a young married woman. Comparably, the *agunah* both reveres and desires Reb David, and for his sake offers herself to the old lecher, Moishe Tsirulnik. This is not to imply that Grade's major concern is with the delineation of Jewish sordidness in Eastern Europe. On the contrary, in view of what has been said above, and in view of Freud's illustration concerning first experiences and subsequent actions,²³ there is no question that one of the primary points at issue is that of a valid Jewish rejoinder to the human longing for incest.²⁴

As seen from this standpoint of Jewish morality, however, it is significant to note that the character of Tsemah Atlas, with all his longings, bears a resemblance to certain typical leaders of the *Musarist* movement. Indeed, the entire framework for Grade's novels should be seen in the

21. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

23. Sigmund Freud, "Some Character-Types," *Op. cit.*, p. 106. Whatever else one may think of Freud as a literary critic, it is clear that the above-mentioned configurations fall in line with his psychological analysis of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*. There Freud states that the inward force of our first experiences drive us to bring about, by subsequent actions, the same situations which had been realized in the original instance. Since there is hardly a more compelling force in the infant's mind than the trauma of incestuous desire, its repetition in various guises in later life is to be expected, which is precisely what Grade's characters evince.

24. Cf. Emilio Servaido, "The Lure of the Forbidden," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34 (1953): 325-327; Ludwig Eidelberg, "The Attraction of the Forbidden," *The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis*, 5 (1949): 211-218.

context of the *Musarist* movement, since the author himself is partially a product of it.²⁵ Of chief interest are the religious and philosophical tenets of the *Musarists* as they come to expression in Atlas' *Weltanschauung* and in Grade's counterreply.

High among the priorities of this school of thought and action, founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter in 1840, is a strict, almost etymological obedience to the principle of *Musar*. The word is itself a *hof'al* participle of a root which conveys not only the meaning of "to instruct," but, also, of "to reprove," "to discipline," and "to punish." Although one notes positive aspects in Salanter's "Epistle of *Musar*," such as the importance of critical self-examination, study of the Torah, good deeds, and the need for compassion, "there is no greater compassion than to remind and arouse people to study Fear."²⁶ In practice, the *Musarists* seemed to have stressed the negative aspects of a basically sound moral philosophy, emphasizing, instead, man's "unclean nature" and using it as an excuse to be unduly severe with themselves and others. In psychoanalytic terms one might speak here of the energy of striving for higher ideals being perverted and enlisted in the cause of destroying the ego.

This latter point is evident throughout Grade's work. In an early poem entitled, appropriately enough, "The *Musarnikes*," one hears young yeshivah students making such statements as, "One must hold himself distant from the world,"²⁷ and "A *Musarnik* must be able to wallow in mud."²⁸ Another young student describes the proper moral life as "going about, carrying a spear in one's heart."²⁹

The same holds for Grade's short story, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," a description of a series of meetings with a former *Musarist* acquaintance. Grade uses the framework of these meetings to offer a profound argument against the *Musarist* philosophy, and to present his own views on life, literature, and religion. Yet, within this framework, the *Musarist*, Hersh Rasseyner, presents his own interesting and revealing views. "Reason," states Hersh, "is like a dog on a leash who follows sedately in his master's footsteps—until he sees a bitch."³⁰ Since man cannot trust his reason to oppose his *yezer*, it follows that he must rely upon, and submit to, a higher authority—the Law of God. Such reliance and submission, however, when carried to extremes, lead to a destruction of the self, and from moral masochism to erotogenic masochism:

25. Grade himself studied for a time in the *Musarist* yeshivah at Navaradock.

26. The "Epistle of *Musar*" may be found in the original Hebrew and in English translation in Menahem G. Glenn's *Israel Salanter* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1953). The above quotation appears on p. 154.

27. Chaim Grade, *Di Musarnikes; Mein Krig mit Hersh Rassyner* (Jerusalem: Ha-Universitah Ha-Ivrit, Ha-Hug Lesifrut Yiddish, 1969), p. 17.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

30. Chaim Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," in *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, ed. Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), p. 590.

We want a more onerous code, more commandments, more laws, more prohibitions . . . more and more sacrifice for the Master of the world; to cry out until the spirit is exhausted: "For thy sake are we killed all the day," to go about until the soul departs, with a shattered heart and hands raised to heaven: "Father, Father, only you are left to us!"³¹

As for Tsemah Atlas, there is no doubt that his masochistic behavior becomes clearer when viewed in the light of *Musarist* principles. Further understanding is provided by the fact that his mentor in the novel, Reb Yosef Yoizel (in real life one of the chief disciples of Rabbi Israel Salanter), fought with himself for seven years "to crush his own ego; he struggled to subdue himself, submerge himself, efface himself."³² It is also interesting to note that the Navaradocker yeshivah, which constitutes the early background of the novel, and which was in reality founded by Reb Yosef Yoizel, based its program on the principle of "the negation of man as man," and on an almost "Kabbalistic self-mortification."³³

Nevertheless, the above acts against the ego represent only outward tactics of self-debasement. Though at one point Tsemah literally wallows in the mud because he holds himself responsible for the death of the girl he has rejected, in the main his guilt lies deeper. Like one of Freud's "Character-Types in Psychoanalytic Work" (Those Wrecked by Success), and Alexander's "neurotic character," Atlas' illness expresses itself not in any one particular external nervous symptom, but, rather, in an ongoing inward destruction, avoidance of success, and the courting of disaster. "Whereas in the neuroses the unconscious makes use of special mechanisms, such as hysterical conversion, symbolic obsessive acts, delusional ideas, all characteristically isolated as far as possible from the rest of the person's life, the neurotic character interweaves his life with his neurosis—his life constitutes his neurosis."³⁴ That is the tragedy of Tsemah Atlas. Tormented by forbidden wishes and an overbearing conscience, his fate is not unlike that of Oedipus:

The recluse removed the dripping candle from the lectern and went into the women's section of the synagogue, where he used to sleep. Tsemah remained in the thick darkness and wailed even more loudly: "Woe is me! Because I have sinned my world is made dark! Adam had eyes which enabled him to see to the end of the world. But his desire for a beautiful fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge dimmed the light of his eyes and blackened the world."³⁵

What is Grade's answer to all of this? Certainly not self-castration. As "Chaim" admonishes Hersh Rasseyner:

"You are severe in your judgments," I answered. "You always were, Reb Hersh, if you'll pardon my saying so. You call these wise men putrid idols, but you refuse to see that they lifted mankind out of its bestial state. They

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 596, 599.

32. Menahem G. Glenn, *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

34. Franz Alexander, "Castration Complex in Character-Formation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, IV (1923): 12.

35. Chaim Grade, *Tsemah Atlas*, Vol. I, pp. 152-153.

weren't butchers of the soul and they didn't talk themselves into believing that human beings can tear their lower urges out of themselves and lop them off. . . ."³⁶

Nor is it the "nervousness" of the founder of the *Musarist* movement, Reb Israel Salanter, a disease apparently induced by too severe a suppression of undesirable impulses:

Rabbi Israel, whose body was not so strong because of poverty and self-inflicted privations, could not stand the strain. He suffered a nervous disorder of serious nature. He was subject to melancholy fits, the results of his pessimistic teachings and ideas.³⁷

Grade rejects what may be regarded as an "unholy" alliance between the superego and the id, an alliance whereby forbidden desires are permitted to enter the conscious, provided tribute is exacted in the form of punishment or suffering.³⁸ Instead, Grade advocates awareness, understanding, acceptance, and control. As such, Grade's reply is similar in some respects to that of Rieff's "psychological man," who must learn to live beyond conscience, or Erikson's "generative man," who does not vanquish his negativities but, rather, synthesizes them into a delicate balance.³⁹ However, whereas Freud likened the ego to a rider on horseback who must hold in check "the superior strength of the horse,"⁴⁰ Grade's guiding ego resembles rather a kindly old Jew who barely has the strength to rise from bed. In *Tsemah Atlas*, Grade utilizes the figure of one of his early and most influential of teachers to vindicate the bearable life.

With the appearance of this character toward the end of the first volume, the entire novel takes on a new and higher dimension.⁴¹ The reason for this is a penetrating mental vision which not only dissects the characters of the novel, but which cuts straight through plot and locale to impinge upon the unconscious of the reader. Yet this perspicuity is untinged by sadistic or masochistic hubris; Mahaze Avraham's statements bear the imprint of gentle Jewish wisdom. They contain the knowledge and experience of one who has mastered not only the traditional tomes but also the Freudian "talmud."

There is, for example, this counsel to *Tsemah Atlas*, where Mahaze Avraham's words describe and warn of the psychological phenomenon of the idealistic ego not only turning upon itself but reaching out to do harm to others:

36. Chaim Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," p. 587.

37. Menahem G. Glenn, *Op. cit.*, 54. Cf. Sigmund Freud, "Sexual Morality and Nervousness," *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), Vol. II, pp. 77-99.

38. Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Man, Morals, and Society* (New York: International Universities Press, 1945), p. 158.

39. A comparison of the theories of both Rieff and Erikson with regard to the "good man" is to be found in Don S. Browning's *Generative Man* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc. 1973).

40. Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1960), p. 15.

41. Mahaze Avraham or "The Vision of Abraham," as Grade names him, is based on the young Grade's teacher, Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, who was known as, and published his work under, the name *Hazon Ish*, or "Vision of Man." This character, thus, represents even in his names a synthesis of vital Jewish and human elements. Cf. Aharon Sorasky, *Hazon Ish*, Israel: Netzah, 1971).

The moral of the story is that in matters relating to heaven, as well as in one's affairs here on earth, one should live according to fixed laws. If one is to sacrifice oneself for another beyond all measure and where it is unnecessary, it may occur that one will become cruel precisely where kindness and compassion are needed.⁴²

At another point, Mahaze Avraham removes the veil from Tsemah's self-perpetuating dialectic of forbidden desire and guilt: "You are severe beyond all reason, an extremist, because you yourself feel drawn to strange shores. . . ." ⁴³ Thus, under the guise of analogy, Mahaze Avraham chides Tsemah for his incestuous wishes and pretentious self-punishment.

However, Mahaze Avraham's reproof and censure are not outright condemnation. He is too learned, too keen a student of human nature for that. He knows that man is only man: "Self-love and the pursuit of various pleasures, including forbidden pleasures, are deeply rooted in man's nature."⁴⁴ His counsel is that of patient control and involvement with the one thing that enhances man's existence in this world: study of the Torah.

This latter point is all the more interesting in view of the fact that Grade is both a realist and a secularist. As such, his answer cannot be precisely that of Mahaze Avraham. It is, rather, that of the enlightened modern Jew whose scarred soul finds its balm, not in Gilead, but in the best that secular art, literature, and philosophy have to offer. This is not to say that either his *Musarist* or his Jewish background is an anathema to Grade. As "Chaim" tells Hersh Rasseyner:

We are the remnant of those who were driven out. The wind that uprooted us is dispersing us to all the corners of the earth. Who knows whether we shall ever meet again? May we both have the merit of meeting again in the future and seeing how it is with us. And may I then be as Jewish as I am now. Reb Hersh, let us embrace each other.⁴⁵

Grade never idealizes instinct at the expense of morality and religion.⁴⁶ On the contrary, from the pain and love that he lavishes upon his characterizations of the *agunah*, Tsemah Atlas, and Mahaze Avraham, it is clear that not only does he understand human instinct, but that he has an abiding appreciation for those ego-integrating values which are inseparable from Jewish law and tradition.

42. Chaim Grade, *Tsemah Atlas*, Vol. II, p. 139.

43. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 400.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

45. Chaim Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," p. 606.

46. Cf. Marjorie Brierley, "Notes on Psychoanalysis and Integrative Living," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 28 (1947): 103.

Abraham Joshua Heschel's "Biblical Man" in Contextual Perspective

S. DANIEL BRESLAUER

A RECURRING PHRASE IN THE THEOLOGY OF ABRAHAM Heschel is that of Biblical Man. It provides not only a convenient designation of the unique Jewish viewpoint, but also a bridge to non-Jewish traditions.¹ The term, while traceable to Heschel's early writings, resonates with a peculiar American flavor that can be located in the affinity of Heschel's ideas to particular dilemmas of the American Jew.

In his first extended discussion of Biblical Man, Heschel contrasts the Greek and Hebraic standpoints. The former cherishes utility, the latter awe; the former seeks power over nature, the latter searches for the mystery within it.² There is a dichotomy that Heschel sees between Hebrew responsiveness to the ineffable and Hellenistic utilitarianism.

Biblical Man's sensitivity to the ineffable recalls Heschel's evocation of the man of piety.³ But, as the Bible is for Heschel primarily a prophetic book, more than piety is involved.⁴ The prophet performs a social function, his moral outrage revealing the social lethargy of average men.⁵ This social function is subordinate, however, to the prophet's religiousness. Not political involvement but sensitivity to God is the hub of the prophetic message.⁶ Such a view modifies the social radicalism of the prophets, who no longer present challenges to institutions but, rather, demand that the individual "see the world through the eyes of God."⁷

While Heschel never denies the Jewishness of the Bible—indeed, he often equates Biblical religion with Judaism—it is clear that the ability to see the world through the divine perspective is a basically human one. Not only is it accessible to all humans but, in a special way, it is necessary for them. Heschel claims that the Greek and modern views of man are

1. See the remarks made by Edward H. Flannery in *Brothers in Hope: the Bridge, Judeo-Christian Studies Volume V*, John M. Oesterreicher, ed., (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 316 and Bernhard Anderson, "Confrontation with the Bible," *Theology Today*, XXX:3 (October 1973): 267–271.

2. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1955; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), pp. 14, 56, 61, 94, 200.

3. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), pp. 273–296.

4. *God in Search*, pp. 89–90. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), xiii.

5. *The Prophets*, pp. 5, 16, 208, 408.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 208.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

actually perversions. Only the Biblical anthropology gives a correct perspective on humanity, as only Biblical ontology, which "begins not with being but the surprise of being," is the only correct perspective on existence.⁸ The basic question is, thus, "whether to be involved in the Hebrew Bible or to live away from it."⁹ All modern men, not merely Jews, are challenged to accept Biblical Man as a role model.

The outstanding characteristic of Heschel's presentation is its ambiguity. There is a vacillation between the emphasis on the uniqueness of Biblical Man in contrast to other religious viewpoints and the demand for the adoption of Biblical religiousness by all modern men. Behind this ambiguity there is an interesting ambivalence.

While Heschel acknowledges the specific nature of Judaism, he seems reluctant to elaborate its particularity, and it is fitting to ask why. An explanation of Jewish distinctiveness would inevitably lead Heschel into a consideration of Jewish law, of *halakhah*. Yet, while attached to the Law, he is ambivalent about its effectiveness in the modern world.¹⁰ While tradition provided him with roots and a clear identity, it was also a stumbling block; its power could not easily be communicated to others. It was far simpler to transmit the inner grandeur of Judaism, its religious effectiveness, than to demonstrate the cogency of the detailed laws which surrounded that grandeur. Heschel chose, therefore, to stress inwardness and general religious perspectives rather than Jewish particularity. Biblical Man provided him with a symbol that legitimated his concern for general religiousness without severing his connection with a specific Jewish identity.

While Heschel's ambiguity reflects, on one level, a psychological ambivalence, on another level a sociological ambivalence is also present. Institutions and social conventions are essential in creating and maintaining a political following. Yet, leadership must appeal to a broader audience than its originally limited powerbase. Heschel's political leadership, while at first restricted to a group of committed radicals, emerged as an influence on the entire Jewish community. This was possible because of the ambivalence which he finds in prophetic politics. While potentially radical, the prophet's inwardness makes his radicalism ambiguous. Politically responsive and morally responsible, the prophet is, nevertheless, concerned less with the transformation of institutions than with the conversion of hearts. Such an inner orientation renders the prophet less of a revolutionary model.

In his discussion of Biblical Man, as in many of his other concepts,

8. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who Is Man?* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 70.

9. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays in Applied Religion* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965), p. 171.

10. Note the clear statement of this ambiguity in *The Insecurity of Freedom*, pp. 187-211. Particularly revealing is the statement on p. 206 when he urges "Instead of indulging in the sorrow and admission of our failures, let us undertake a new effort to revive the dry bones."

Heschel shared the ambiguities of a majority of American Jews.¹¹ The term Biblical or Hebraic as a description of one strand of western tradition, in contrast to the Greek or Hellenistic strand, was originally a Christian one.¹² Jewish theologians had accepted it only after its popularization in the 1950s by Will Herberg and Martin Buber,¹³ who felt uncomfortable with the particularity inherent in more traditional usages. As these Jews wrote for an audience of both Jew and non-Jew, a neutral term was desirable.

While these theologians, particularly Will Herberg, sought to use the description "Biblical" in confrontation with general American religiousness, the term, in itself, was ambiguous. As Robert Bellah has pointed out, there is a heavy reliance on Biblical imagery in the American civil religion.¹⁴ Theologians may have sought to distinguish themselves from the general popular religion through calling themselves Biblical, but the general culture itself has appropriated the term as its own.

This theological confusion was exacerbated by the proliferation of religious institutions each claiming to speak for the entire Jewish community.¹⁵ While voicing a sense of common identity, Jews could not point to a unified interpretation of their theology.¹⁶ The market situation in religion presented American Jews with an indefinite number of options but lacked an overarching framework into which all of the options could

11. For a more detailed treatment, see S. Daniel Breslauer, *The Impact of Abraham Joshua Heschel as Jewish Leader in the American Jewish Community* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1974).

12. See, particularly, Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941). Also note that Will Herberg, *Judaism and Modern Man: An Interpretation of Jewish Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951) almost always cites non-Jewish sources for his distinction between Hebraic and Greek thought—except when he cites Martin Buber. On post-Biblical thought, however, Jewish sources abound.

13. See the above book by Herberg; the discussions at the end of Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, New Edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960) are also relevant. See Martin Buber, *Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948) the section entitled "Biblical Life." Robert Gordis also sought a "Biblical" theology of Judaism: see Robert Gordis, *Judaism for the Modern Age* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1955) and Robert Gordis, *The Root and the Branch: Judaism and the Free Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962).

14. Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 168–189.

15. See Eugene B. Borowitz, *A New Jewish Theology in the Making* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968) and Emil L. Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1968) for the Reform perspective. On Conservatism see Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement*, New Augmented Edition (New York: Schocken Books, 1972). On Orthodoxy see the collection, *A Treasury of Tradition*, Norman Lamm and Walter S. Wurzburger, eds. (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1967). See, also, Solomon Poll, "The Persistence of Tradition: Orthodoxy in America," *The Ghetto and Beyond: Essays on Jewish Life in America*, Peter I. Rose, ed. (New York: Random House, 1969).

16. See Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, second edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1970), pp. 140ff.

be placed.¹⁷ There was the need, therefore, for a symbol of Judaism that would cut across the boundaries set by variations in observance.

The diversity that separated Jews was even more pronounced in relation to political issues. Radicals advocated intense social and political action on all matters in American or International affairs. Liberals were more cautious. Some suggested action only on specifically "Jewish" issues, such as separation of church and state, Israel-oriented concerns, and the plight of Soviet Jews. Still others voiced a desire for political stability rather than for political change. Each political position advocated a different theological justification for the Jewishness of its approach.¹⁸ Radicals denounced conservatives as unprophetic; conservatives claimed that the liberals and radicals were self-hating and had perverted the texts.

In this context Heschel can be seen as capsulizing American Jewish feelings of ambivalence. His stress on Biblical Man caught the psychological struggle of Jews wrestling with their desire for Jewish identity yet reluctant to accept the particularism represented by the legal tradition. Biblical Man provided a symbol transcending institutional boundaries; it was a role model equally accessible to Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews. Heschel's emphasis on this common religiousness served as a bridge between factions and pointed to the commonality which American Jews sensed but which they could not articulate. That Biblical Man stood dangerously close to an undifferentiated American religion was not a defect but, rather, a truthful reflection of the American Jewish dilemma.

The political aspect of Heschel's approach was also representative of American Jewry. Couching his political theories in Biblical language made them more ambiguous on paper than his actions would suggest. Prophetic politics was not tied to particular political programs or to specific ideologies. This open approach enabled him to expand the range of his leadership. In his picture of the prophet he voiced the American Jewish political orientation: the common sentiment for political responsibility, together with the common vagueness about the programs which this responsibility entailed. That his own actions were less ambivalent than his words may only explain why they were also less effective.

Heschel's view of Biblical Man was, in its total effect, an expression of American Jewish concerns. His writings offer more than an opportunity to discover insights into Jewish thought; they invite the reader to share in the psychological and sociological climate of American Jewry and to struggle with the ambivalence found therein.

17. Jacob Neusner, "From Theology to Ideology: The Transformation of Judaism in Modern Times," *Churches and States: The Religious Institution and Its Modernism*, Kalman H. Silvert, ed., with an introduction by Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: The American University Field Staff, 1967), pp. 13-48.

18. The concern for a theology of social action was one shared by both advocates and critics of such action. Note the range of views in an anthology such as *Judaism and Ethics*, Daniel Jeremy Silver, ed. (New York: KTAV, 1970); see, also, the discussion on Jews and liberalism—"Judaism and Liberalism: Marriage, Separation, or Divorce, a Symposium" in *JUDAISM XXII* (1972): 9-50.

The Sociologist as Theologian: The Fundamental Assumptions of Mordecai Kaplan's Thought

MEL SCULT

KAPLAN AS THINKER IS REALLY TWO PEOPLE. MANY

of those who have known him can easily understand his concept of Judaism as a civilization and his attachment to Zion and to the Jewish people. But, in addition to being a dedicated Jewish nationalist, Kaplan is also a philosopher within the greater tradition of the liberal understanding of religion. To say merely that he is naturalistic or pragmatic would be a distortion of his thought, but he does tend in the direction of the functional and experiential understanding of religious phenomena. It is this more difficult aspect of his approach that we shall primarily seek to elucidate.

In order to understand Kaplan's radicalism, we must look into how he used the social sciences, and particularly sociology, to understand religion in general and Judaism in particular. Kaplan's Zionism and his identification with the Jewish people were part of his view of Judaism from his earliest years. Because of his own group consciousness, he was naturally drawn to people and books that helped him to deepen his understanding of the way in which groups functioned. After studying such social thinkers as Herbert Spencer, and some minor figures such as Charles Cooley and Franklin H. Giddings, Kaplan adopted two basic ideas which are key analytical concepts in both sociology and philosophical pragmatism. If we can understand these concepts, we shall have deepened considerably our grasp of the basis of Kaplan's whole system. The first is the notion of function, the second is group consciousness.

When we examine people's actions psychologically, we think of their motivations. Sociologically speaking, however, behavior may also be viewed in terms of its function; it might be easier if both of these modes of analysis were subsumed under one heading. Some sociologists distinguish between manifest function, or that which is seen as the goal of an action by the actor, and the latent function, which is the unforeseen or unintended result of a particular action.¹ For example, those who actively oppose pornography see themselves as guarding the public morality, but certainly one of the latent functions of their behavior is to keep pornography in the hands of criminals and to ensure the high price of this material.

It is important to note that the concept of function was used exten-

1. See Robert K. Morton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Chicago: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957).

sively by the sociologists read by Kaplan as a graduate student. Kaplan put himself squarely within the sociological mode of thought when he wrote the following about the Jewish religion: "The question, 'What is Judaism?,' therefore resolves itself into the question, 'How do these beliefs and practices function?' . . . for the function of a thing practically constitutes its essence."²

When we talk about functions, we ought to remember that this concept may be applied to ideas as well as to the actions and behavior of individuals. For the sociological thinker, ideas may be examined not only from the point of view of their validity, but for their social location and function. Kaplan has shown, for example, that the idea of the Chosen People became strengthened among Jews in times of great stress when they experienced a need to feel a sense of dignity and self-worth. It served to give them a sense of mission and meaning during the long periods of isolation and degradation.³

It has frequently been maintained that Kaplan, in his functionalism, was decisively influenced by Dewey,⁴ but in all of Kaplan's early writings we find not one reference to the great philosopher of pragmatism. It also should be noted that the bulk of Dewey's work came out in book form after Kaplan's thinking had already been molded by the sociological tradition.⁵

There is no doubt, however, that philosophers of the pragmatic persuasion have much in common with the sociological thinkers and, therefore, pragmatism may be one of the influences on Kaplan. The chief vehicle of that influence seems to have been, not Dewey, but William James. It may be of interest that, when a group of Seminary rabbinical students asked Kaplan to form a study group that would deal with religion, he chose works by James as the basis for discussion. They met at the Kaplan home every Saturday night to deal with the nature of religious experience.⁶

Pragmatism is a particularly American philosophy and was just coming into its own when Kaplan came into intellectual maturity. William James' *Pragmatism*, published in 1907, flowed from a series of lectures which he delivered in Boston at the Lowell Institute and in New York City at Columbia University.

Before we take a brief look at pragmatism in order to see what value it

2. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. I, February, 1917, p. 254.

3. Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 23.

4. See, for example, Mordecai M. Kaplan: *An Evaluation*, ed. by Ira Eisenstein and Eugene Kohn (New York: Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 1952), p. 19; or articles on Kaplan in *The Encyclopedia Judaica*, and by Charles S. Liebman, "Reconstructionism in American Life," in *American Jewish Yearbook 1970* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1970), p. 51.

5. E.g., *Democracy and Education* (1916), *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929).

6. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. I, February, 1915, p. 125.

might have for understanding Kaplan, we should note that, although Kaplan almost always leans toward the rational and the experiential, there is another side to him which rarely surfaces and is not fully appreciated, even by those who know him well. Kaplan is a complex individual of many moods, and his mystical, poetic, emotional nature is at times clearly evident. Looking into his early journal we find the following statement written in 1905:

There is a kind of mysticism which is essential to thought and without which thought is both barren and heartless. That is the sense of the infinite which must supplement every concept of the finite. Science does not need it as long as it aims to be particular, but it is sure to grow narrow if it dismisses such mysticism entirely.⁷

The appreciation for the mystery of life shown here is not something that Kaplan lost as time passed. Some twenty-one years after the above statement was written we find him again dealing with the mystery. "God," he wrote, "in his essence is transcendent. As such He represents the mystery which we cannot help sensing behind the phenomena of the cosmos."⁸

Let us return now to pragmatism and, particularly, to William James. Although Kaplan prefers to call himself a functionalist rather than a pragmatist, he is clearly within the pragmatic frame of mind as defined by James, who said that:

The pragmatic method is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true?⁹

Even the most rigorous pragmatic thinker, however, will not seek to verify each and every statement which he accepts as true, but he does believe passionately that all true statements must, at least in principle, be capable of verification through experience. In this sense we may classify Kaplan as pragmatic.

The clearest statement on pragmatism by Kaplan comes from an unpublished manuscript entitled "The Meaning of Religion" which he wrote in 1929. We see here both his caution and his commitment.

We do not have to accept Pragmatism as a philosophy of life or as a means of getting at the ultimate and metaphysical nature of reality to accept it as a method of knowledge or as the logic of scientific procedure. We make no philosophic or metaphysical commitments when we identify the nature of a thing (for purposes of manipulating it or setting it right when there is something wrong with it) with the manner in which it functions, with the difference it makes in other things. Applying this pragmatic method of getting at the nature of religion we learn as much as there is to be learned about religion for purposes of adjustment and manipulation, by having a correct and clear idea of the way in which religion has functioned in the

7. *Communings with the Spirit*, August 21, 1905. This is Kaplan's first journal and runs from 1905 to 1908.

8. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. III, March, 1926, p. 61.

9. William James, *Pragmatism and Four Essays from the Meaning of Truth* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 42.

numerous guises which it has assumed in the different civilizations and eras of human development.¹⁰

Here we can begin to see a fundamental tool of Kaplan's thinking. His first question about a religious or Jewish matter will be: what function did it fulfill when it originated? How did this function change throughout Jewish history? Does this matter now fulfill the same function that it did in the past? If it does not, what will take its place and will now serve the same goal? These questions are applied by Kaplan to the belief in a supernatural deity, to prayer, to the concept of the Chosen People, to the concept of the world to come and to many individual *mizvot*.

After the passage just quoted, Kaplan goes on to present what he sees as the principal functions of religion. He attempted many times to formulate a list of these key functions and the three cited here may be replaced by others which vary only slightly.

1. As a supposed means of effecting desirable changes in the environment which could not be effected by empirical and humanly controlled factors.
2. As a means of salvation emphasizing the values of life which have the quality of holiness.
3. As a means of faith making man feel at home in the world by inculcating in him a sense of confidence in the inherent tending of the universe to make for man's security and happiness, providing he conform to its nature and controlling agencies . . .

In Kaplan's earliest published writings his pragmatic emphasis comes through as a hard-hitting attack against abstract theology in favor of the experiential. In 1915 he wrote:

A condition indispensable to a religion being an active force in human life is that it speak to men in terms of their own experience . . . the language of theology might have a certain quaintness and charm to the ears of those to whom religion is a kind of dreamy romanticism. But to those who want to find in Judaism a way of life and a higher ambition, it must address itself in the language of concrete and verifiable experience.¹¹

In 1914 he noted in his journal that reconstruction of Judaism could take place only ". . . on the basis of natural human experience within the reach of every one of us . . ."¹² Such an emphasis on experience would lead, of course, to considerable diversity of belief and practice in the religious sphere; Kaplan was always willing to accept this diversity as a sign of health. In a series of articles which he published in *The Menorah Journal* from 1915 to 1917, he hit hard at the idea that there was a specifiable set of doctrines which were incumbent on all Jews. Kaplan believed that the doctrines were ever-changing and evolving, but that the underlying life-force—the life of the Jewish people—bound the generations one to the other.

10. The manuscript, entitled "The Meaning of Religion," is in Kaplan's own hand and runs to about one hundred pages. It is among his private papers. The comment cited here is on p. 3.

11. Mordecai Kaplan, "What Judaism is Not," *The Menorah Journal*, 1, 4 (October, 1915): 215.

12. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. 1, August, 1914, p. 57.

One might say that Kaplan's whole life proves that he was wrong on this point of the insignificance of dogma in Jewish life, at least insofar as his own time was concerned. He was to find out over and over again how much dogma there was in Judaism when he denied longheld beliefs and saw the furious reactions that he excited. Anyone who knew Kaplan was aware of the fact that, though in his beliefs he was a thoroughgoing radical, he was still an observant Jew. If people would have taken seriously the Rabbinic dictum, *lo ha-midrash ikar ella ha-maaseh* (It is not the idea or homily which is the essential point but, rather, the deed), Kaplan would have made many fewer enemies.

In attacking dogmatism Kaplan again puts himself within the pragmatic tradition and exhibits the sociological bent of his thinking—the pragmatic person must always be ready to discard a cherished belief if he finds evidence which will disconfirm it. In the search for truth, William James offers a guiding principle with which Kaplan would certainly concur.

If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there be any idea which, if believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would really be better for us to believe in that idea, unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other greater vital benefits.¹³

Insofar as sociology is concerned, there is an implicit relativity of truth which sociologists are led to accept. Exploring different classes and different cultures, comparing and contrasting their values, describing the social conditions under which certain ideas take hold—all of these make it inevitable that "truth" should become a more tentative phenomenon. His continued exposure to sociologists during his education led Kaplan to doubt that anyone had eternal truths.

The notion of functionalism is tied closely to group life, according to Kaplan. He once wrote, for example, that "The various beliefs entertained by different religious groups may be said to be true for each representative group, insofar as they function beneficially for that group."¹⁴

To many, the strong identification of religion with group life seems to miss the point. We would agree with Alfred North Whitehead when he defined religion as what man does with his solitariness. On first consideration, religion seems to be the particular and very individualistic way in which men confront ultimate questions. Kaplan would agree with this view, for he never sought to erase the individualistic approach to religion, but he always maintained that group life was primary in any religious system. It is impossible, therefore, to understand Kaplan's approach

13. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 59.

14. This quotation is taken from notes for a course that Kaplan gave at Columbia. The notes are entitled "Outline of Lectures of Course Given at Teacher's College Columbia." The quotation that is cited is on page 5 and was delivered on February 23, 1917. (Kaplan private papers, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.)

unless we first understand something more about the way in which groups function and how their values are formed.

The beliefs and values which the members of any group hold in common constitute their collective consciousness. This collective consciousness works through us, and in us, to establish the range of possibilities that exist in any situation when we have to make a choice. The collective consciousness has a force and power all its own. All of us are concerned with what "people will think" and with doing the "right thing." Both of these expressions indicate that the power of the collective is at work in moving us to a particular decision. The collective consciousness with which we are concerned here is sometimes referred to as the collective mind. Kaplan has at times maintained that the collective mind is as real as the individual mind. In his words, "Social science is gradually accustoming us to regard human society not merely as an aggregate of individuals but as a psychical entity, as a mind not less but more real than the mind of the individuals who constitute it."¹⁵ No matter how we stand on this particular question we cannot deny the influence of the group in molding our beliefs and attitudes.

We may understand the concept of the collective mind more fully if we see how it is analogous to the individual mind. Although philosophers have debated the question as to whether other minds exist, the ordinary person feels no reason to doubt the existence of many minds. If, however, we think about the problem, we realize that we observe only the functioning of the mind but never the mind itself. We can observe the brain, but the brain and the mind are not the same thing. The individual mind is real but unobservable. In the same way, we should be careful not to think of the collective mind as some metaphysical entity. It is created by the collective functioning of many individual minds and it is real even though it is unobservable. The individual mind has certain qualities which can also be ascribed to the collective mind. For example, the collective mind has memory, as we see so well illustrated in the case of the Jewish people. The individual mind may also be described as having imagination and powers of adjustment.¹⁶ These abilities have been exhibited by the Jews as a collectivity throughout their history.

According to Emile Durkheim, one of the chief proponents of this concept, the collective consciousness functions differently, depending on the fundamental organization of the society in question.¹⁷ In societies which we would call primitive, the collective consciousness includes almost the totality of the consciousness of individuals; social imperatives govern the whole of life and it is rare that individuals really distinguish

15. Mordecai M. Kaplan, "What is Judaism," *The Menorah Journal*, I, 5 (December, 1915): 316.

16. Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Essence of Judaism*, lecture, no date, p. 9, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

17. See Emile Durkheim, *On the Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933).

themselves from each other. In more highly developed societies, where there is a greater division of labor and more significant differentiation among individuals, the collective consciousness embraces less of the consciousness of individuals. In a still further advanced society there are additional circumstances in which an individual can choose to modify social imperatives. One of the key concerns of modern life, then, becomes the problem of coherence and unity. As society becomes more complex and differentiated the individual becomes freer and community consensus is weakened. Since values are, to a degree, collective rather than individual, group functioning becomes the key to the moral life. The matter is analogous to language. Although speech is individual, the language we use significantly structures the way we look at the world. In the same way, although our behavior is an individual matter, it is significantly structured by the fact that we are social animals and that our values emerge from, and are acted out in, social situations.

Religion, because it deals with values, is fundamentally related to the collective consciousness. Religion concerns itself with morality and with the perfection (i.e., salvation) of the individual and it is inescapable that the group will have primary influence in determining the nature of religious beliefs and habits. Many, including William James, find the essence of religion within the mind of the individual, but for Kaplan, even in the case of unusual or charismatic individuals, the social element is paramount. As he puts it:

Even where the experiences seem most personal and entirely isolated from the environment as is the case with visions, trances and hallucinations, a closer examination will inevitably reveal the operation of social forces generated by the religious life of the group to which the highly sensitized individual belongs.¹⁸

The relationship between the collective consciousness and religion is also reciprocal, each influencing and molding the other. But not all shared beliefs and values concern matters which are of importance in the religious sphere. Religion reflects primarily those commitments which are of a spiritual and moral nature. Let us define religion, then, as that part of the collective consciousness which deals with fundamental and ultimate concerns about the nature of man, his goal as an individual and his obligations to his fellows. Or, to put the matter in Kaplan's own words:

Religion is the unity of aim which a social group develops whereby each individual in it shall attain the highest degree of perfection.¹⁹

The implications of Kaplan's conception of religion and group life flow in two different directions when applied to the Jewish people. First of all, the concern with group life leads him into embracing Zionism. Any

18. Mordecai M. Kaplan, "How May Judaism Be Saved," *The Menorah Journal*, II, 1, (February, 1916): 43.

19. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. I, January, 1916, p. 203.

living organism, and the Jewish people is such an organism, has mental and physical parts. One cannot function without the other.

The mind, whether individual or collective, functions only through the physical organism. Hence the need of concerning ourselves with physical nationality. This can only be done in a Jewish land.²⁰

The second direction which we must follow leads us into community life in the diaspora and, particularly, in America. Kaplan accepted the diaspora as an inevitable part of Jewish life and believed that Jewish life could flourish only in the context of a rich and varied communal existence. "Religion," he maintained, "is only possible where you have a social group that has other interests in common besides religion."²¹ It was, consequently, the duty of the rabbi to build up communal life so that the synagogue could function as a social center. We see here the direct connection between the system that Kaplan was developing and his communal activities. It was precisely at the time that he was publishing his first articles in *The Menorah Journal* (1915–1917) and working out his views in his diary, that he was involved with the establishment of the first Jewish Center on West 86th Street in New York City.

In conclusion, then, we have seen that Kaplan's background in sociology led him to analyze Jewish life in terms of the role or function that particular beliefs, opinions and institutions filled. He sought new ways to fulfill these traditional functions of religion. We have also emphasized the group aspects of religion insofar as Kaplan was concerned. He sought to redress the view that one could understand the religious experience by looking primarily at individuals. For him, religious life was always individual and social at the same time, because the individual, even in his most private moments, cannot escape the group values that have molded him. It is not only that we are social beings, but that our fulfillment or salvation depends very much on the quality of group life that surrounds us.

20. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. II, August, 1917, p. 295.

21. *Kaplan Journal*, Vol. I, December, 1913, p. 28.

Benjamin Franklin, His Genesis Text

ARTHUR A. CHIEL

IN THE FALL OF 1759, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN JOURNEYED from London to Edinburgh, where he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of St. Andrews. While in Scotland, he was hosted by the jurist and man of letters, Lord Kames. One evening, while visiting the Kames estate in Berwick, Franklin astounded his lordship and the assembled guests by declaring that the Old Testament clearly favored toleration. Lord Kames, a Presbyterian Scotsman who knew his Bible, vigorously countered Franklin's assertion, whereupon Franklin requested a Bible, opened it and proceeded to declaim the following passage, which he introduced as a chapter in Genesis.

1. And it came to pass after these things, that Abraham sat in the door of his tent, about the going down of the sun. 2. And behold a man, bent with age, coming from the way of the wilderness leaning on his staff. 3. And Abraham rose and met him, and said unto him: Turn in, I pray thee, and wash thy feet, and tarry all night; and thou shalt arise early in the morning and go on thy way. 4. But the man said, Nay, for I will abide under this tree. 5. And Abraham pressed him greatly: so he turned and they went into the tent, and Abraham baked unleavened bread, and they did eat. 6. And when Abraham saw that the man blessed not God he said unto him, wherefore dost thou not worship the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth? 7. And the man answered, and said, I do not worship thy God, neither do I call upon his name; for I have made to myself a god, which abideth in my house and provideth me with all things. 8. And Abraham's zeal was kindled against the man; and he arose and fell upon him, and drove him forth with blows into the wilderness. 9. And at midnight God called unto Abraham saying, Abraham, where is the stranger? 10. And Abraham answered and said, Lord, he would not worship thee, neither would he call upon thy name; therefore have I driven him out from before my face into the wilderness. 11. And God said, have I borne with him these hundred and ninety and eight years, and nourished him, and clothed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me; and couldest not thou, who art thyself a sinner, bear with him one night? 12. And Abraham said, Let not the anger of the Lord wax hot against his servant; lo, I have sinned; forgive me I pray thee. 13. And Abraham arose and went forth into the wilderness and sought diligently for the man and found him, and returned with him to the tent; and when he had entreated him kindly, he sent him away on the morrow with gifts. 14. And God spake unto Abraham, saying, For this thy sin shall thy seed be afflicted four hundred years in a strange land. 15. But for thy repentance will I deliver them; and they shall come forth with power and gladness of heart, and with much substance.

This *Parable Against Persecution*, as it came to be known, was but another of Franklin's imitations of a Bible text. He wrote several such pieces, at different times during his creative lifetime, in support of the virtue of brotherly understanding, but it was this parable, in particular, which, some years later, created considerable stir.

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In 1774, Lord Kames, in the second volume of his *Sketches of the History of Man*, introduced the substance of *A Parable On Persecution* as follows:

The following parable against Persecution was communicated to me by Dr. Franklin of Philadelphia, a man who makes a great figure in the learned world, and who would still make a greater figure for benevolence and candor, were virtue as much regarded in this declining age as knowledge.

Because of Kames' introduction and generous tribute to Franklin, it was inferred that Franklin was its original author. In 1779, Benjamin Vaughan, who published a volume of Franklin's writings, *Political, Miscellaneous and Philosophical Pieces*, included the parable in the book. From here it made its way into the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January, 1780. At this point a lively dispute erupted as to who was its real author. The readers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* were urged to examine Jeremy Taylor's "Polemical Discourses," where the parable could be found at the end of the twenty-second section of his "The Liberty of Prophesying." (Taylor's work had appeared in 1646.) Taylor's version, slightly abridged, follows.

When Abraham sat at his tent door . . . waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man . . . coming towards him, who was an hundred years old. He received him kindly . . . provided supper, and caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not . . . he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven? The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only and acknowledged no other god . . . Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out . . . and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was? He replied, I thrust him away, because he did not worship thee. God answered him, I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me; and couldst not thou endure him one night, and when he gave thee no trouble? Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

But the curious were now moved to push the inquiry forward. For Jeremy Taylor, in his introduction to the parable had indicated: "I end with a story which I find in the Jews' Books."

At last, in May, 1788, a writer in the English monthly, *Repository*, announced that he had discovered the "Jews' Book." It was a Latin version of Ibn Verga's *The Rod of Judah*, translated by George Gentius, and published in Amsterdam, in 1651. In the dedication to that work was the same parable, ascribed to the twelfth-century Persian poet, Sa'di.

Some fifteen years of debate followed Lord Kames' attribution of the parable to Franklin who was obviously too preoccupied to join the affray. It was, after all, a rather minor matter in the life of a statesman involved in the international affairs of a new nation. At last, in 1789, Franklin troubled to respond to his detractors.

In the postscript of a lengthy letter of November 2, 1789, to his London friend, Benjamin Vaughan, Franklin wrote

Your mention of plagiarism puts me in mind of a charge of the same kind which I lately saw in the *British Repository* concerning the "Chapter of

Abraham and the Stranger." Perhaps this is the attack your letter hints at, in which you defended me. The truth is, as I think you observe, that I never published that Chapter, and never claimed more credit from it than what related to the style, and the addition of the concluding threatening and promise. The publishing of it by Lord Kames, without my consent, deprived me of a good deal of amusement, which I used to take in reading it by heart out of my Bible, and obtaining the remarks of Scripturians upon it, which were sometimes very diverting; not but that it is in itself, on account of the importance of its moral, well worth being made known to all mankind. When I wrote that in the form you have it, I wrote also another [Parable on Brotherly Love], the hint of which was also taken from an ancient Jewish tradition; but not having the same success as with the other, I laid it aside, and have not seen it for thirty years past, till within these few days a lady of my acquaintance furnished me with a copy, which she had preserved. I think, however, it is not a bad one, and send it to you enclosed.

Franklin thus made clear his relationship to the much disputed parable: that the Scripture language and the two verses at the end were all that he would claim as his own.

What of the twelfth-century Persian poet, Sa'di? Had *he* created the parable out of his own head and by his own talent? His version of it, to be found in the second book of the *Bustan*, begins with the telling phrase: "I have heard . . ." Sa'di does not say by whom it was related to him. But, perhaps, a clue to this puzzle is to be found in Sa'di's other work, the *Gulistan*. In the thirty-first tale of the *Gulistan*, the author recounts having been taken "prisoner by the Franks and consigned to a pit in Tripoli to dig clay along with some Jews." Might Sa'di "have heard" some *midrash* from them, which stirred his creative mind to write his own parable? Sa'di's parable, somewhat abbreviated, reads thus:

I have heard that . . . Abraham, friend of Allah . . . would not break his fast unless some hapless traveller came to him from the road; and so he went forth to look about him on every side . . . [He] espied a man alone . . . his head and beard white with the snow of eld. Heartily he gave him welcome and invited him. . . . The other consented . . . for he knew the habit of the saint, upon whom be peace! The wardens of Abraham's guest-chamber seated the humble old man with honour . . . They spread a table and all seated themselves about it, but when they began "In Allah's name," no sound from the old man came to the saint's hearing. He addressed him thus: "O ancient of days . . . is it not a duty that when you eat your daily bread, you should mention the name of him that provides it?" The man replied: "I do not believe it. I never follow a practice I have not heard of from my Zoroastrian teacher." The prophet of goodly fate then understood that the old man . . . was a fire-worshipper, and . . . drove him away . . . saying that it was a sin for the impure to remain with the clean. From the Almighty there came the archangel Gabriel in awfulness to rebuke him: "O Friend, for a hundred years I gave him daily bread and life; you were wearied of him in a moment. Even though he prostrates himself in worship of fire, why should you withhold the hand of generosity?"

Sa'di's parable does, indeed, have strong echoes in Jewish sources.

One text that presents itself for consideration is that of *Bereshit Rabbah*, 49.4.

For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice—*zedakah u-mishpat*. [Gen. 18, 19] R. Aha said in the

name of R. Alexandri's name: This (*zedakah*) refers to his hospitality [to the wayfarers].—The Rabbis said: It refers to visiting the sick. R. Azariah said in R. Judah's name: First *zedakah* and then *mishpat* (justice). How is this to be understood? Abraham used to receive wayfarers. After they had eaten and drunk he would say to them, "Now recite Grace." "What shall we say?" they asked. "Blessed be the God of the Universe, of whose bounty we have partaken," he replied. If one consented to recite grace, he would [be allowed to] eat, drink, and depart. But if one refused, he would demand, "Pay me what you owe me." "Why, what do I owe you?" he would reply. "One *xestes* of wine costs ten *follera*, a pound of meat costs ten *follera*, a round bread costs ten *follera*. Who will give you wine in the wilderness; who will give you bread in the wilderness?" Seeing himself thus driven into a corner, he would say, "Blessed be the God of the Universe of Whose bounty we have eaten." Hence, *zedakah* is written first and then *mishpat*.

In this *midrash*, Abraham is characterized as offering hospitality only in return for praise to God. "Pray or pay" is Abraham's approach to wayfarers. He is unequivocally the missionary.

A second interesting text, from *Baba Mezia*, 86b, intimates criticism of Abraham for his seeming tit-for-tat approach to wanderers.

Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet [Gen. 18.4]. R. Jannai, son of R. Ishmael, said: They [the travellers] protested to him [Abraham], "Dost thou suspect us of being Arabs, who worship the dust of their feet? Ishmael has already issued from thee."

The suggestion in this Talmud text would be that because Abraham suspected the strangers in this fashion, his own descendants, the Ishmaelites [Arabs], as a punishment, would practice the same kind of idolatry.

A third text that begins to approximate the Sa'di version is that of *Bereshit Rabbah*, 48.9.

And he lifted up his eyes and looked [Gen. 18.2]—he saw the *Shekhinah* and saw the angels. . . . R. Levi said: One appeared in the guise of a Saracen, the second in the guise of a Nabatean, and the third in the guise of an Arab. Said he [Abraham]: 'If I see that the *Shekhinah* waits for them, I will know that they are worthy. . . .

Here the Divine Presence intervenes to inform Abraham that the visitors are worthy of his attention. In the Sa'di parable, God makes clear to Abraham how he must deal with the old fire-worshipper.

A final text that might have deprived both Sa'di and Benjamin Franklin of their own creations, had they known it, is that of *Sifre Ekev* 38:

R. Eleazar, R. Joshua and R. Zadok were reclining at the [wedding] banquet of R. Gamaliel's son. R. Gamaliel filled a glass for R. Eleazar, who would not accept it. Said R. Eleazar to him, "Joshua, what is this? We are reclining while R. Gamaliel stands and waits on us!" Said R. Joshua to him: "Let him! Abraham, the greatest man in the world, waited on the angels, even though he thought them to be idolatrous Arabs; as it says: 'He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood against him, and . . . he ran to meet them.' Shall then R. Gamaliel not attend to their wants!"

As for Franklin's *Parable Against Persecution*, it proved to be a felicitous creation which continues to have circulation to this day. Its humanness has had universal appeal and it is genuinely reflective of Franklin's consistent tolerance of his fellow men.

Equality and Human Rights: The Lockean and the Judaic Views

LENN EVAN GOODMAN

"THE CLASSIC THESIS OF THE DECLARATION OF IN-dependence," as Robert Gordis wrote some years ago, "is deeply suffused by the spirit of biblical faith, refracted by the rationalist liberalism of John Locke."¹ The central thesis of that Declaration, which has now endured two hundred years as the most explicit articulation of American political faith, is the doctrine of inalienable rights which is predicated there upon the postulate of human equality, the equality of all persons before God and before the law. By ultimate origins this concept of equality is Biblical, rooted in the Pentateuch and clearly stated in the words of Malachi (2:10): "Have we not all one Father; has not one God created us? Why then should we despise one another, desecrating the covenant of our fathers?" The principle here is that human equality derives from man's relationship with God, conceived concretely in terms of God's creation of all and, thus, spoken of metaphorically as His fatherhood of all. This relation of creator and, hence, of father, to all men which subsists between God and man the prophet conceives as conferring rights and obligations. Therefore, he speaks of it as a covenant, and warns that those who scorn the equality implicit in God's universal creation of all men have, in fact, desecrated a divine covenant just as grievously as if they had violated an oath established by their ancestors before God. Malachi addresses this argument to his audience in the context of a particular point that he wishes to urge. But he does not confine the force of the argument to that point; he speaks universally: To reject the concepts of human equality of deserts, even in intention or attitude, is the height of impiety before God and before all the ancestors of the human race (*our* fathers). In articulating this thesis, Malachi is only making explicit the underlying assumption of the Mosaic Torah, that justice requires uniformity of treatment for all who come before the law, a principle which the Torah frequently expresses by the imperative: One law shall there be for you, for citizen and sojourner, free and bound, men, women and children, maintaining uniform standards of treatment for all according to the underlying human unity of all who come before the law, despite the numerous differences of condition and situation which may call for differences of treatment, but always according to a uniform standard.²

1. *The Root and the Branch*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 81.

2. See Exodus 12:49, Numbers 15:16, 29, etc. The very principle of the rule of law has the assumption that justice involves equality, that is, equal treatment of equal cases, as its

The refractions and abstractions which the Biblical ideal underwent before its incorporation into Locke's philosophy and, thence, into the American Constitution and political consensus transformed that ideal tellingly. Many of the most critical problems which the United States has confronted through its history and many of those which it continues to confront now, and for the future, result from those transformations.

The idea of human equality in the Torah and in the Jewish tradition is founded upon the assumption of the absolute worth of the individual human being. The Torah expresses this idea by speaking of man as created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), by ascribing to God the judgment that the world with man in it was "very good" rather than simply "good" (Genesis 1:4, 10, 18, 21, 25, 31), and in numerous other ways. According to the Sages of the Talmud, it is because each human being is unique and irreplaceable that murder is such a grievous crime in the eyes of God. As they put it, to slay one's fellow is tantamount to destruction of the world, for the human race began with but one person. Like the world, each human person is perfect and alone in representing all the potentialities of his type. When a human artisan creates, the Sages explain, each exemplar from the mold is identical. But, when the Holy One, blessed be He, creates human beings, no two instances of His work are alike.³ Thus, each person is of incomparable worth, and, therefore, the value of every human life is absolute; *i.e.* it must be considered to be infinite when any calculations of priority or evaluative judgments are to be made. For this reason we are commanded to love one another as we love ourselves. The so-called Golden Rule as stated in the Torah is not a principle of reciprocity, "Do as ye would be done by," but a corollary of the concept of the individual's absolute worth. Only in the framework of the assumption that every person is of absolute worth can we be commanded categorically to assign the same worth to our fellows⁴ as we do to ourselves.

The Christian doctrine of original sin represented a serious alteration in the basis on which many in the West conceived of human equality. Rather than assuming that each human life was of absolute positive worth, as the Torah had done, and calling that worth into question only when the value of human life itself or some other absolute value had been jeopardized as by murder, say, or some other irredeemable crime, the Christian doctrine reversed the field. Man was of inestimable worth only potentially, and that not by a natural potentiality of his own but only through grace and the vicarious atonement by God's son for the inborn and, by natural means, ineradicable sin of Adam. Human equality, then, could not be predicated upon an assumption of the absolute worth of the

fundamental basis. Thus, the provisions for a permanent, public, written law are expressions of the same fundamental axiom. See Deuteronomy 17:11, 18; 27:3, 8; 31:11, 24, 26; etc.; for uniformity as justice see especially Leviticus 24:22.

3. *Sanhedrin* 37a; cf. Genesis 4:10, 9:6, etc.

4. Leviticus 19:18, "Love thy neighbor . . ." is, of course, a mistranslation; *re'akha* here expresses mutuality and nothing else.

individual. Indeed, there was a fundamental and ultimately unbridgeable inequality, a chasm, between those who were called to God's grace and those who were irrevocably damned by the innately flawed nature of the species.⁵ Equality, on these Christian terms, could represent only the parity of the human situation, shared by the sinners and the saved, *i.e.*, that, for all alike, the elect as well as those whom God unaccountably had neglected or abandoned, human effort was of no avail—certainly not in the Calvinist reading of Scripture and of Augustine, which inspired and chastened the Puritan Fathers and Mothers.

The secularization of the Biblical ideal of equality had an even more devastating effect. The result of this second of the two major transformations in the Biblical ideal was to set human beings at equality not before God but before one another. Like the Christian view, the secularized view was pessimistic about human nature. But this view ignored even the possibility of redemption, which concept the Christian thinkers had retained from the Torah⁶ and, thus, departed entirely from the Biblical ideal of the absolute positive worth of the human individual even as a matter of potential. Hobbes' view, which Locke, in this case, adopted unquestioningly, and which went back to Machiavelli and, ultimately, to the Greek Sophists, was both naturalistic and pessimistic. It assumed that human beings are, by nature, aggressive and grasping toward one another, and was, in its underlying meaning, predicated on that sophistic perversion of the Biblical imperative which is popularly recited as an ironic apologetic for injustice: "Do unto others *before* they do unto you." Hobbes had learned all he felt he needed to know of human nature from his observations of the anarchic behavior of his contemporaries before and during the religious and civil wars of the 17th century and from the confirming reports of Thucydides, whose *History* Hobbes had translated in 1629. In this work, the Greek historian had represented the deterioration of moral standards and conventions in times of social unrest in an account so classic in its expression and development that it seemed, both to its author and to his readers, to reveal an unalterable truth about the fundamental nature of man. The conclusion that Hobbes drew from his reading and experience was that the function of government is the re-

5. We read the Bible so much today, especially before the advent of Jewish Studies in the colleges, in an atmosphere of Christian symbols and doctrines that it is easy to forget that Judaism never accepted the idea of a hereditary fall of man. Maimonides writes, quite unselfconsciously, that no one is born either good or evil. These are acquired characteristics based on habits of action. He certainly does not treat the story of Adam and Eve as describing a historical "fall from grace" which adversely affected the salvation of all future generations, but, rather, as an allegory of the universal human condition, symbolizing the fact that we are called upon to make moral choices with only our limited and subjective insights as their foundation. (See my *RAMBAM, Readings in the Philosophy of Moses Maimonides* [New York: Viking, 1976], pp. 208–215, 223–261).

6. "From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord," Leviticus 16:30; "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as crimson they shall be white as snow, though they be red as scarlet they shall be like wool," Isaiah 1:18; *cf.* Zehariah 3:9, Isaiah 50:1, etc.

straint of man's natural aggressive tendencies. Locke differed with Hobbes as to the extent of power which was necessitated and legitimated by this function, but he conceded and, in his eagerness to limit the scope of governmental power, even emphasized the fundamental assumption of Hobbes, that the *sole* legitimate function of the state is restraint of its citizens from their natural tendency to take advantage of one another by whatever means, fair or foul, to profit from one another's loss. This doctrine of Locke's, which is often assumed to be a mainstay of the American political ideal, is, in a way, the antithesis of the Judaic idea of law. For where Judaism sees the goal of law as the perfection of the individual and society,⁷ Lockean liberalism regards even the endeavor in such a direction to be misguided and unjust, an illicit departure from the sole legitimate political function of restraint. Fortunately for America's political, social, educational and economic development, American institutions have not remained confined within these narrow bounds.

In the secularized conception, human equality was no longer a norm of God. Rather, an effort was made to regard it as a fact of nature. Only by the notion that human beings are equal in fact, so it was thought, could one justify the assumption that they are equal in right. This reasoning is totally foreign to the Biblical conception, where the principal thrust is the demand that individuals be treated as equals, regardless of actual differences in their station, wealth or position.⁸ In the Torah, the right of the widow and orphan is existential, founded upon their humanity and underscored by their helplessness. So, for that matter, is the right of the wealthy. It is neither strengthened nor diminished by their status.

In Locke, by contrast, the argument for the equality of human rights is founded on the assumption of the virtual equality of the power of all individuals. This assumption is a fiction, although it was regarded in Locke's day as a very modern and world-wise piece of naturalism. It stems from, and reinforces, a tendency to ignore theoretically (and, in a practical sense, remain insensitive to,) the plight of the helpless and dependent classes in society. It treats all humanity as though it were composed solely of free, healthy, adult males all commensurate with one another in their talents and in their disposition to use those talents aggressively in their own behalf according to the notions of economic advantage which Locke's model, following the Sophists, equates with rationality.

Stating the matter in this way makes it clear how Locke's underlying

7. See, for example, Maimonides' discussion of the role of government in general and of the Biblical legislation in particular in *Shemonah Perakim* 3-5, and Part III of the *Guide to the Perplexed*, excerpted and discussed in my *RAMBAM*, pp. 224-261, 404-432.

8. Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:17, 16:19. In the Torah, respect of persons, deference to wealth or poverty, greatness or insignificance of position, is placed on a par with the taking of bribes; both are perversions of justice. And, as foundation for the prohibition, it is clearly stated that God Himself does not show favoritism in judgment (Deuteronomy 10:17). Thus, the absolute standard of justice is equated with the identical treatment of identical cases and explicitly excludes regard for the extraneous considerations of personal relationships or socio-economic status.

assumption here was far from accurate. The heightened moral sensitivity of the prophets only calls attention to facts which everyone can see, that the conditions of equality which Locke assumes belong to a utopian or messianic age. They are empirically unknown in any actual society of which we have historical or anthropological evidence. Yet Locke believed that these conditions of factual equality were so manifest, so "self-evident" a fact of nature, that he felt the need to argue their reality in only one respect, the equality of the capacity of all men (I think it is important that he would have said "men" here) to kill, maim or plunder one another. It was this reduction to an equality of aggressive capabilities which, in the eyes of his contemporaries, gave the stamp of realism to Locke's doctrine. They would have dismissed the notion of equal rights as a wishful fiction had not Locke absorbed this pessimistic view of man.

What rendered Locke's assumption of the virtual equality of human destructive powers "realistic" was, of course, his insistence on relating this assumption to his hypothetical state of nature, in which, supposedly, no social organization or cooperation of any sort existed; correlatively, Locke assumed a state of weapons-technology which was not only much more primitive than any he knew, but, also, uniformly so. Modern studies in anthropology and animal ethology indicate that the hypothesis of man as a non-social animal borders on the incoherent. (Aristotle's notion that man is, by nature, a *zoon politikon* or social animal, is far closer to the mark.) Modern weaponry, the fearsome arsenal of the nuclear, biological, laser and other technologies, renders Locke's conception of human equality in death-dealing more obsolete today than the stone ax. It simply is not possible, before I inspect your bag of tricks and you investigate mine, to know *a priori* that my power is equivalent to yours. Of course, this fact, and the whole technology that implies it, are results of the social organization of the arts and sciences, that is to say, of human culture, and, in that sense, the falsity of Locke's hypothesis is nothing new; only the current extent of its falsity is modern and constantly increasing. Human beings have always been culture-bearing animals and, in that sense *differences* in the ability to steal, say, have existed at least as long as has property. Thus, it is easy to see that Locke's assumption of an equality of human powers of plunder and aggression is false and always has been. What is important for us, from a Judaic perspective, however, is that it was upon the Lockean notion of equality in power to rob, kill, maim, rape, *etc.*, that America's ideal of liberty was founded, rather than upon the Biblical notions of the moral equality (other factors being equal) of all human beings in merit, propinquity to God, absolute value in the realm of God's creations, etc.

Judaism founds human right upon the assumption that, ideally, all human beings are of equal merit (*i.e.*, all are, at least at the outset, equal in their moral potential), equal before God and, therefore, equal in desert before the law and their fellow human beings. Christianity founds human equality on the presumed lack of merit of all natural men. Locke, follow-

ing Hobbes, Machiavelli, and, ultimately, the Sophist equation of right with power, founds human equality on the presumed natural equality of power, not to create but to destroy. Even when this secularized version of the basis of human rights was couched in the traditional theological language, “that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights . . .” the argument by which the claim was buttressed was an appeal, not to divine authority, but to natural power, ultimately to arms—which the Lockean romantics still thought of as the effective force of free and independently acting and choosing individuals who would, by nature, protect and defend each his own self-interest. For what made it self-evident that basic human rights are inalienable was no profound insight into the moral and existential nature of humanity such as is found in the Torah and the prophets. It was based on the simple consideration that, by the law of nature, no self-seeking being (such as man was assumed to be), would, or could, surrender his opportunity for defense and for aggression against others unless and to the extent that he was guaranteed reciprocal concessions by others. Even then, the proviso remained that the opportunity must remain open for him to resume his offensive and defensive roles in nature’s presumed war of all against all at any time that he should deem these guarantees not to have been fulfilled.

It may seem that the distinction between the Biblical treatment of equality and that of Locke, which forms a cornerstone of much of American political thinking, is of purely theoretical interest and of no particular practical import. After all, it might be argued, Locke simply placed on a naturalistic footing the same doctrine of equality which the Bible had expressed theologically, that what matters from the point of view of law is the question of equality itself, not how equality is derived or justified. I think that this supposition is fundamentally unsound for two reasons: (1.) It ignores the fundamental implications of the pessimistic view of human nature and human potential, which is built in to Locke’s political doctrine, that is, the implications of Locke’s uncritical assumption of the Sophists’ view of men as having no significance to one another socially other than as sources of potential danger. (2.) It results (as Locke intended) in the complete restriction of the role of governmental action to the area of restraint against aggression from without and from within the group. In other words, the only governmental function that Locke’s view clearly legitimates is the police/military one. It takes no cognizance, as the Torah does, of the prior and, ultimately, much more significant question of human well-being, its nature and conception and the means by which it can be sought and secured by cooperative endeavors. These implications of Locke’s political idea arise out of his transmutation of the social contract from its Biblical original as a covenant between man and God to its more familiar modern version as an arrangement among men.

The Anti-Semitic "Imaging" of the Jew in America

MICHAEL DOBKOWSKI

HISTORIANS LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN anti-Semitism have had to deal with the perplexing question of causation. Unlike the Europeanists who have chronicled and analysed centuries of Jewish oppression on the Continent as a chapter in the long and intricate story of European religious, political and economic development, which has often been anti-libertarian, American historians have had the unenviable task of reconciling anti-Jewish prejudice with what is generally interpreted to be a basically democratic American society. They have been able to do so by deflating the scope and intensity of anti-Jewish manifestations in America and by emphasizing the social and economic roots of prejudice, which are essentially transient, rather than the ideological and religious factors which may, indeed, be permanent.

In other words, Oscar Handlin, Richard Hofstadter and John Higham, the three historians most closely identified with this question, contend that the new level of overt and articulate anti-Semitism that was a development of the end of the nineteenth century was either relatively insignificant, or rested primarily with the anti-Semitic rhetoric of the Populist movement, or was precipitated by social conflict as Jews moved out of the "Ghetto" and into the Fifth Avenues and Riverside Drives of America. These theories, I respectfully submit, are inaccurate oversimplifications. All three scholars display an astonishing inclination to deny the anti-Jewish character of the most obvious and flagrant stereo-typical expressions that appeared, far too frequently for comfort, in literature, on the stage, and in the popular press. Evidence seems to indicate that, well prior to the 1890's, there were many misconceptions and falsehoods, including conspiracy theories, that circulated in America and that had nothing to do with the agrarian protest or social claustrophobia. The error, thus, lies in overlooking the presence of other significant sources of anti-Semitism—the image of Jewish criminality, unassimilability, Shylock, etc.—and the underestimation of the quality and quantity of prejudice that was present decades before the century came to a close. The pervasiveness of this negative imagery is one more indication that America was not as tolerant in this fluid and turbulent age as some of its apologists would have us believe; it is one more index of the continued

presence of anti-Semitism in American society. Despite all professions of equality, prejudice did persist, and it was expressed, consciously or unconsciously, through the stereotyping of the American Jew.

First, let us examine the question of religious tolerance. The Jews who crossed the Atlantic to build new lives experienced a great degree of social acceptance, but, unfortunately, did not find a corresponding sympathetic appreciation for their religion. Christian Americans brought with them, as emotional and cultural baggage, many of the prejudices that were prevalent in their own "Old Country" and added a few more. A nation built of many nations did not rid itself so easily of the misconceptions of its forefathers. As a consequence, Judaism as a faith and as a way of life was not viewed as a positive force in American society. It was perceived as a backward religion that, at its best, underscored the progressive nature of Christianity, and, at its worst, presented a direct challenge to the American mission. Once again, ignorance and insensitivity presented a real problem for the Jews, for if their faith was not understood or valued, what, then, were the prospects of acceptance as equal and valuable members of society? Can a people ever be truly free of the fear of oppression if its culture and traditions are not recognized as legitimate and meaningful expressions of a valid and progressive religion?

It is essential, then, to determine how Americans conceptualized Judaism before we can arrive at some appreciation of the role of negative imagery in American anti-Semitism. Beginning in the 1830's and continuing through the century, a stream of religious novels set in the Biblical or Christian periods provide some revealing indicators. One searches in vain for the sympathetic and universal Jew like the one created in Europe by a Gotthold Lessing or a Richard Chamberlain. The Jews of the American fictional genre are shackled by a tribal religion that never outgrew its allegiance to the harsh and cruel desert God Yahweh. They are a narrow people, bigoted by nature and proscribed by their faith from accepting a more humane and compassionate way of life—Christianity. Always fanatically proclaiming the superiority of Judaism, they are not averse to bending their knee to the golden calf when it suits their fancy. Witness the Biblical trilogy written by the Episcopal priest, Joseph Holt Ingraham, published between 1855–60, that enjoyed such enormous success. The first volume, *The Prince of the House of David* (1855), for example, sold between four and five million copies.¹ Together with the other two, *The Pillar of Fire* (1859) and *The Throne of David* (1860), each centered on a great figure from the Bible.

1. Don B. Seitz, "A Prince of Best Sellers," *Publisher's Weekly*, 119 (February 21, 1931). 940.

Joseph H. Ingraham, *The Pillar of Fire* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888 [c 1859]); and *The Throne of David* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896 [c 1860]).

In a Christological account, Ingraham traced the decline of Judaism, from its prophetic Mosaic period to the dissipation of the Kingdom of David, until it became, by the time of Jesus, a totally narrow and superstitious faith.

Such themes even intruded into a generally balanced treatment like that in Lew Wallace's best selling novel, *Ben-Hur, a Tale of Christ* (1880). This work did some good by allowing the Hebrew to glory as a member of the "race" that produced Christ; but it also did significant harm by emphasizing a relationship that can never lead to the eradication of anti-Semitism. Jews are depicted in the novel as reverent servants of the law who are strongly devoted to their families and friends, but they are also described as proud, insular and nationalistic followers of a religion that long ago prostituted the spirit of God. To the anti-Semite Messala, "... all men and things, even heaven and earth, change; but a Jew never."² Most of the Jews who appear in the novel are basically malicious and vengeful types. Malluch believes that Ben-Hur, for example, is Jewish, because of the intensity of his hatred, and Simonides, a cripple, who owes his broken, deformed body to Roman cruelty, hates while realizing that it is an evil passion. He rationalizes his behavior by proclaiming that "... revenge is a Jew's right; it is the law."³

The tidal wave of popularity that greeted *Ben-Hur* was to whet the popular taste for the religious novel and bring forth numerous books in the following years. In 1881, James Freeman Clarke, the prominent transcendentalist and Unitarian clergyman, brought out his *Legend of Thomas Didymus, The Jewish Sceptic*, which is in the same tradition but is not as conciliatory as Wallace's work. The gulf between Jew and Christian looms quite large for Clarke and is clearly reflected in the novel. The practices and requirements of Judaism are presented as reactionary and stifling. Thomas, the narrator, complains that he no longer receives comfort or gratification from Jewish rituals. The dietary rules and the Sabbath laws, for example, are oppressive in their demands and take away all freedom of movement or individuality.⁴ The very nature and extent of these requirements make lofty thoughts impossible and put Judaism in a strait jacket, according to Clarke. Every act in life is ticketed and marked, this forbidden, that permitted. The only lesson that Thomas is able to glean from the complicated dictates of his creed is the necessity to separate himself from the abominable "stranger" who sought always to impinge on Jewish prerogative. "To hate with a holy hatred the idolatries and idolaters of the world I believed to be a main part of the Jewish faith."⁵

2. Lew Wallace, *Ben-Hur* (New York: Signet Books, 1962 [c 1880]) p. 69.

3. Ibid. p. 260.

4. James Freeman Clarke, *The Legend of Thomas Didymus, The Jewish Sceptic* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1881), p. 64.

5. Ibid. p. 65.

The final transgression, according to this fiction, was committed, of course, during the time of Jesus, for that was the spiritual watershed when Judaism chose to forsake the future and to retreat, instead, to the superstitions of the past. A plethora of novels published in the late nineteenth century deal with this topic and it is within their pages that we discover the most detailed and negative evaluation of the creed, in addition to the charge of deicide. Because of their unanimity of interpretation, a few examples will suffice. The *fin-de-siècle* dandy and esthete, Edgar Saltus, tried his hand at this theme in *Mary Magdalen: a Chronicle* (1891), where we find Jesus' generosity and Mary's humanity contrasted with the intolerance and relentless cruelty of the Jews, who are portrayed as fanatical formalists easily excited into frenzy concerning Christ's guilt. Mary Elizabeth Jennings' *Asa of Bethlehem and His Household* (1895), and Caroline Atwater Mason's *The Quiet King* (1895), parrot many of these stereotypes: Jews are formal; they tend to be exclusive and unassimilable and are vengefully ferocious in their hatred of the gentle Jesus; their religion is decayed and corrupted by materialism and is no longer relevant and functional. The tradition of Christian anti-Semitism was further popularized by Florence M. Kingsley in her novels, *Stephen* (1896), *Paul* (1897), and *The Cross Triumphant* (1898). These works, published by the New Sabbath Library, sold well over a million copies and, undoubtedly, found themselves on many a child's Sunday School desk. They were directed towards an older audience, but, at five cents a copy, were not prohibitive in either price or style for an impressionable, juvenile public.⁶

The preachings of Christianity reinforced, as we have seen, by religious fiction, made a consistent statement regarding the bigoted nature of Judaism and created an atmosphere, in a religiously active century, that was not conducive to mutual understanding and regard. The justifications for the prejudice appeared to be overwhelming and Jews could find little comfort in their tenuous security while literature, as well as Church doctrine, continued to degrade their character and faith.

The imaging of the American Jew was not, however, relegated only to a discussion of their doctrinal and theological deficiencies. Americans in the Gilded Age were also inundated by Jewish stereotypes that made damaging commentaries on the immigrants' social traits. One that is of interest because it is not usually associated with Jews, is their identification with shady practices, robbery, gambling and violent crime. This stereotype lent credence to the view that, whenever they can, Jews par-

6. See also William A. Hammond's *The Son of Perdition* (1898); Elizabeth S. P. Ward's *The Story of Jesus Christ* (1898); Fannie Newberry's *The Wrestler of Philippi* (1896); Anna May Wilson's *The Days of Mohammed* (1897); Rev. Enoch Burr's *Aleph, the Chaldean* (1891); Rev. George Anson Jackson's *The Son of a Prophet* (1893); Edmund Berry's *Leah of Jerusalem* (1890); Eliza Lee's *Parthenia* (1858).

ticipate in antisocial activities, that they are predisposed to find ways of making money even if they are illegal, that they undermine the American work ethic, and that they do not engage in the legitimate pursuit of wealth, but, instead, they are involved, along with the Italian immigrants, in clandestine endeavors masked by the mysterious, subterranean society of Baxter Street and Broadway. The American interpretation of Judaism was one strike against the Jews. If, in addition, it could also be demonstrated that Jews had little respect for Christian laws, property or even life, as certain individuals and literary treatments seemed to imply, then their status, in the popular mind, was thereby again seriously compromised.

Several early plays vividly expound and develop the image of Jewish criminality. Melter Moss, in Tom Taylor's, *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*, (1864), is a counterfeiter, forger and burglar who has never done an honest day's labor in his life. He roams the streets of New York looking for the easy caper, the one with no risk and that requires little courage or originality, since he has neither. In similar fashion, Dion Boucicault, a popular nineteenth century dramatist, makes the Jewish character, Mo Davis, in his play, *Flying Scud* (1867), a crooked, unscrupulous, cowardly scoundrel, who is meant to be an unmitigated miscreant, speaking in dialect and involved in shady deals that always fail. He is a perennial complainer who continually laments his misfortunes. "Oh, vy didn't I stick to the cigar and cabbage leaf line? The swindle was small but it was sure." A second play by Boucicault, *After Dark* (1868), presents another version of this stereotype in Dicey Morris, a gambling-house keeper and blackmailer who even attempts murder in order to accomplish his nefarious purposes.

Melter Moss, Mo Davis and Dicey Morris are all comparatively simple characters who are unsophisticated in their fumbling attempts to avoid capture, but Mordie Solomons, alias Allcraft, in John Brougham's, *The Lottery of Life* (1868), is a more complicated and elaborate villain in his various roles as fence, moneylender, counterfeiter and blackmailer. He is bent on revenge, on increasing his hoard of money and on victimizing the innocent hero. No crime of treachery is too revolting for Mordie to engage in. When his schemes appear doomed, he threatens ". . . such a sweeping revenge the world will shudder at."⁷ To accomplish it, he plans to dynamite those who oppose him while they are aboard ship. He soliloquizes:

Ah! they little know the man whose desperate revenge they have invoked. . . I'll soon interrupt their complacent security. . . The drunkenness of an insatiate vengeance fills me with a sense of devilish joy—cries of despair and death are ringing in my ears.⁸

7. John Brougham, *The Lottery of Life* (New York: Samuel French & Sons, 1867), p. 33.

8. Ibid, p. 40.

One is reminded of Shylock stripped of the dignity which Shakespeare gave him and of the infamous ingenuity and cruelty of Marlowe's Barabas.

Such characterizations were not limited to drama; they also found frequent expression in the popular novels of the period, those hastily written and inexpensive works that reached a wide audience and catered to its fantasies and escapist tendencies, as well as to its appetite for sensationalism and prurience. This fiction generally fell in with the popular mood of the times; it was nationalistic and reflected nativist attitudes towards the immigrant, the Negro, the Indian and the Jew. In it one endlessly meets the unscrupulous Jewish pawnbroker-fence and at least three of Horatio Alger's stories, for example, contain such a stereotype.⁹ As might be expected, dime novels exploited this theme even further. Albert Aiken, for instance, who was one of the most prolific writers published by Erastus Beadle, apparently found in the Jewish character a particular villainy, if the frequency of his use of the Hebrew criminal is any indication. In *The White Witch* (1871), Herman Stoll, a German-Jewish Wall Street broker, is corrupt and fraudulent and is involved in various bunco schemes. Aiken's *The Genteel Spotter* (1884), features another despicable Jew, Sheeny Lew, a brigand and "enforcer" who operates out of the notorious "Five Points" district in New York City, while Aaron Mosenstein, in *Dick Talbot the Ranch King* (1892), is a cunning rascal who is involved in a kidnapping venture.

Their counterparts can be found in the works of Gilbert Jerome, Prentiss Ingraham, H. P. Halsey, and in a number of the popular Nick Carter detective stories.¹⁰ Since these were intended for mass consumption, the reiterated portrait, in most of them, of Jews as being ugly, unscrupulous, money-obsessed and criminally inclined, could not fail to reinforce the traditional stereotype, especially in this period of burgeoning nativism and discrimination.

Aside from the images developed in literature, the assumed inherent moral obtuseness of the Jew received extensive examination in the public

9. Horatio Alger, Jr., *Adrift in New York*; *Ben, The Luggage Boy*; and *Paul the Peddler*.

10. Gilbert Jerome, "Dominick Squeek, The Bow Street Runner," *Old Cap Collier* 1, No. 80 (February 11, 1884); "Old Subtle; or, The Willing Victim," *Old Cap Collier*, 2, No. 125 (January 5, 1885); "Young Weasel, the Detective; or 'Piping' a Beautiful Friend," *Old Cap Collier*, 2, No. 134 (March 9, 1885).

Noel Dunbar [Prentiss Ingraham], "Duke Despard the Gambler Duellist," *Beadle's Dime Library*, 57, No. 730 (October 19, 1892).

Old Sleuth [H. P. Halsey], "Monte-Cristo Ben, The Ever-Ready Detective," *Old Sleuth Library*, No. 63, (December 16, 1893); "Lights and Shades of New York," *Old Sleuth Library*, 6, No. 101 (1905).

J. R. Coryell, "The Book-Maker's Crime; or, Nick Carter's Accidental Clue," *Nick Carter Library*, No. 99, (June 24, 1893); "Among the Fire-Bugs; or, Nick Carter's Bravest Deed," *Nick Carter Library*, No. 110 (September 9, 1893).

sector also.¹¹ The popular humor sheets and graphic magazines of the late nineteenth century picked up the theme and drummed it home in their inimical and sensational style. It is through comedy that many of a society's prejudices are most clearly delineated and the caricatured "Isaacs" and "Ikeys" who were presented to the American public contributed to an already deprecating image. *Puck*, *Judge*, *Life*, *Tid-Bits* and *Texas Siftings* delighted in presenting full-page color cartoons and sketches of men, women and children with huge hooked noses, gross lips and crude, ostentatious manners. These unsavory figures spoke with a vaudeville German accent, were perennially concerned with a bargain or with money to be made from some unsuspecting innocent, and were characterized as dishonest, unscrupulous and, by implication, as unworthy citizens. One of the most frequent charges made against them was that they accepted bankruptcy and arson as a means of making profit. Gradually there began to develop in the minds of many Americans an association between the Jew and insolvency and fraud. For many years fire-insurance and failure jokes were the vogue, and Burnheimer, Burnstein, Smokenstein, Blazenheimer, and Jews of their ilk delighted over this convenient method of making money, even at the expense of property damage or human life. Mr. Burnupsky, for example, is content since ". . . despite hard times, he has had two failures and three fires."¹² Mr. Goldgraber laments that after twenty-four years in the same building he has had his fill of economic stagnation. ". . . Ach! If I don't haf a fire here preddy guig I dik I vill busd up."¹³ Swindlebaum advertises his fire sales ten days in advance of the conflagration¹⁴ and Cohen never fails, but does have numerous fires instead because ". . . he dinks dey pays better."¹⁵ Rosenbaum advises Cohen that there have recently been eighty-seven failures in New York, to which Cohen, much aghast, replies: "Mein Gott! such competition az dot will kill buziness endirely."¹⁶ In fact, it might be said that the Jewish business ethic, according to the graphic weeklies, is like the adage, slightly modified, ". . . If at first you don't succeed, fail, fail again."¹⁷

Along with the Jewish association with criminal activities, one finds, in these magazines, the pawnbroker with his insatiable desire for profit, the parvenu who intrudes into society and degrades everything he touches

11. Other popular novels that rely on this characterization are Richard H. Savage's *A Modern Corsair* (1897); Edgar Fawcett's *New York* (1898); A. H. Frankel's *In Gold We Trust* (1898); Julian Ralph's *People We Pass* (1896); and Colonel Edward M. Alfriend's and A. C. Wheeler's play, *The Great Diamond Robbery*.

12. *Puck*, 36. (1894-5); 232-33.

13. *Judge*, 26, No. 639 (January 13, 1894): 24.

14. *Life*, 24, No. 619 (November 8, 1894): 301.

15. *Ibid.*, 26, No. 670. (October 31, 1895): 275.

16. *Judge*, 35, No. 888 (October 22, 1898): n.p.

17. *Ibid.*, 26, No. 648 (March 17, 1894): 162.

and, of course, the "typical" Jew who believes that if money doesn't bring happiness then certainly it is ". . . der interest vot you get on der moneysch vot makes you happy."¹⁸ Such unfortunate images of the unproductive, exploiting Jew were not likely to contribute to a sympathetic appreciation of the positive values and ideals of the Jewish faith.

The underlying characteristic of such portraits is that the Hebrew, whenever he engages in criminal activities, is more likely to participate in fraudulent business transactions where the motive is profit, rather than with violent crime where the motive is senseless revenge. This harks back to what is perhaps the most persistent theme in anti-Semitism from medieval times down to the present: that of the Jew as a cheap, miserly, manipulator of money who is preoccupied with materialism and characterized by predatory business habits. This depiction is, quite obviously, not an American invention, but is one of the unfortunate articles of cultural inheritance that found its way to the New World as part of the folklore as well as in the visceral baggage brought by the immigrants. Most Americans in the 19th century would probably have agreed with William Cullen Bryant's assessment that the Jews are marked by an "unquenchable lust for lucre."¹⁹

The American Civil War added new fuel to these charges when Jews were accused of selfishly exploiting the conflict and of attempting to destroy the national credit for their own materialistic purposes. It was alleged by Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, and Generals Benjamin Butler, William T. Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant, as well as others, that Jews were engaged in profiteering during the war; that they were responsible for the speculation in gold; that they were supplying the South with goods, thus demonstrating their concern for aggrandizement over patriotism; that they were engaged in passing counterfeit money; that they fed the inflation by charging outrageous prices; that they were driving well-established Christian firms out of business by using unfair competitive methods and, generally, were parasites who thrived on the misery of others.²⁰ *Harper's Weekly* took up the campaign and in an article by the "Lounger" it calumniated the Hebrew for his apparent predilection for exploitative economics that blinded him from higher moral and social considerations. "You have no native, no political, no religious sympathy with this country. You are here solely to make money, and your only wish is to make money as fast as possible. . . ."²¹ There was as little truth in this charge as in any other blanket generaliza-

18. *Puck*, 44, No. 1121 (1898-9): p. 12.

19. William Cullen Bryant, "Bryant's Criticism on Shylock as Portrayed by Edwin Booth," *American Israelite*, 12, No. 52, (June 29, 1866): 410.

20. Undated and unnamed newspaper column reporting a February 13, 1862, speech by Henry Wilson, as found in the Isaac Leeser Papers; Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 122-143, 149.

21. *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 344 (August 1, 1863): 482.

tion, but it helped to fix even more, in the minds of those exposed to it, the myth of the grasping, materialistic Hebrew.

Perhaps nothing highlighted this particular personification more vividly than did the dime novels that featured Jewish characters. There they invariably appear as merchants, secondhand clothing dealers and pawnbrokers and their money-centered personalities complement their dialectal speech and grotesque physiognomies.

If these images were relegated only to popular literature, they could be explained away as examples of how authors cater to the passions and escapist interests of the public. But the same rationalization does not apply as easily to those major novelists who also often reverted to the ancient stereotypes in their treatments of the Jew. Henry James, for example, wrote for a sophisticated audience that accepted his prolific and often belabored prose and waded through thousands of words of descriptive character development, but when they came to the Hebrew, they found a simple, familiar, medieval figure, although this time in Victorian attire.

Similarly, in the novels and plays of Francis M. Crawford, Evelyn Johnson, Clyde Fitch, Hall Caine, Richard Henry Savage, E. S. March and Frank Norris, the Jew, when he appears, is always the exploiter, never the exploited, regardless of whether he covets money, social position, his neighbor's wife, a business coup or even elementary human liberty. He is the ultimate symbol of predatoriness and dissoluteness. As William Dean Howell's Mrs. Lapham remarks in another context: ". . . They've all got money . . .," but they don't know how to use it.²² Even a likeable individual like Old Isaacs, in the popular Charles Blaney novel and play, *Old Isaacs From the Bowery* (1900), who is essentially kind and generous, can be made to remark to his daughter: "Vhy, I vould trust you mit my life, Rachel. But vid mein money, ach, dot vas different."²³

Literature had no monopoly on this stereotype. The Philadelphia *Evening Telegraph* described the Hebrew as an individual ". . . perhaps more inoculated with the love of money-getting than is the average Christian, and hence a little keener and closer in his business transactions. . . ."²⁴ At about the same time, the *Chicago Post* was editorially denouncing the Polish Jew as ". . . speculative, carping, ugly, and mean."²⁵ A decade later, the Fall River, Mass. *Labor Standard* remarked

22. William Dean Howells, "The Rise of Silas Lapham," *The Century Magazine*, 29 (November, 1884): 15.

23. Charles Blaney, *Old Isaacs From the Bowery* (New York: J. S. Ogilvie Publishing Co., 1900), p. 19.

24. Editorial, "The Jew as a Citizen," *Evening Telegraph*, October 19, 1872.

25. Quoted in *The American Israelite*, (September 6, 1872): 8.

that the "... hoggish Jews ... have neither sympathy nor sentiment with anything but a dollar. . . ." ²⁶

Many reputable intellectuals and clergymen fell victim to a similar damaging over-simplification. Social gospellers like Washington Gladden and R. Heber Newton talked about the over-development of mercantilism inherent in the Jewish psyche.²⁷ Chas. Deems, in the same spirit, designated the commercialism of the Jew as the primary cause of anti-Semitism.²⁸ Even University Presidents like W. M. Thornton of Virginia, J. M. Taylor of Vassar and Charles W. Eliot of Harvard indicated some willingness to acknowledge the validity of the charge that Jewish businessmen engage in questionable practices to gain an unfair advantage.²⁹

The aforementioned may have been critical of this Jewish trait, but they were confident of the nation's ability to modify it in time. Others, like James Russell Lowell, Henry and Brooks Adams, Barrett Wendell, Lafcadio Hearn, Vance Thompson, Edith Wharton and Robert Herrick, were not so sanguine. For these writers and thinkers, the Hebrew was a symptom of modern social disintegration. They found Jews everywhere—in the universities and the art galleries, in private clubs and exclusive neighborhoods, but, above all, in control of the marketplace. Hebrews became, for them, the representatives of the diseased, crass and materialistic society which they despised. The decline in contemporary Christian society was due to its contact with a type that is influencing and corrupting, but that can never truly understand or internalize transcendent values. America seemed to be praying before a new god, Mammon, and who better to blame for this travesty than Shylock, the traditional perversion of the capitalist impulse.

This paranoia that apparently affected only a very select fraternity, seemed to take on new relevance with every passing year as the streams of immigrants flooded into Ellis Island. Perhaps there was something to Henry Adams' Jeremiads? Wasn't it a truism that the Hebrew always remains an ethnic and cultural alien, a mysterious outsider, a nation within a nation committed to a separate destiny? With the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews in the 1880's, many Americans, some of them as prominent as Goldwin Smith, John Huston Finley and James G. Blaine, began to ponder the implications of this fact. As the sluice gates opened and tens of thousands of unwashed, foreign and bizarre-appearing kaftan-attired Jews poured in, the capacity of the nation to absorb them was seriously questioned. Here was a compact mass of

26. *Labor Standard*, 8, No. 39 (September 24, 1881): n.p.

27. Letter, Rev. Washington Gladden to Philip Cowen, February 14, 1890, *Philip Cowen Papers*; Rev. R. Heber Newton to Philip Cowen, February 13, 1890, *Ibid.*

28. Rev. Chas. Deems to Philip Cowen, February 28, 1890, *Ibid.*

29. As seen in the letters from W. M. Thornton to Philip Cowen, February 25, 1890, *Ibid.*; Charles W. Eliot to Philip Cowen, n.d., *Ibid.*; J. M. Taylor to Philip Cowen in *The American Hebrew*, 42, No. 9 (April 4, 1890): 92.

human beings, recent residents of the ghettos of Europe, congregating in cities, zealously preserving their religious distinctiveness, their national customs of diet, dress and prayer, their communal autonomy, their individualism, their predilection for commerce. How were they to be assimilated? How were they to be weaned away from the Talmud, that citadel of Jewish separatism? How were they to be liberated from a proscribed *shtetl* mentality? This was a concern that helped to resurrect the myth of the Wandering Jew, living everywhere, but sinking roots nowhere, a part of humanity, but never an integral part of any nation.

Seeing that this stereotype struck a raw nerve in American tolerance, the press, of both the popular and more respectable varieties, joined in the attack. *Leslie's Weekly* took up the issue in 1892. The Jews coming from Eastern Europe, it proclaimed,

...are among the most undesirable and least welcome of immigrants. The degradation of the average of citizenship, the dangerous strain to the country's power to assimilate and redeem, are constant factors, steadily increasing in importance.³⁰

Life magazine concurred.

Jews cling to one another and to the traditions of their race, not because they must, but because they choose to, and Gentiles whom they reproach for exclusiveness may justly answer, "we might have learned that of you."³¹

This clarion call of misunderstanding intruded even into the otherwise dignified middle class magazines of the Gilded Age that prided themselves on their championship of stark honesty. Thus, *The Independent* criticized Judaism because it chose to remain "... in the narrow limits of racial consanguinity."³² Lyman Abbott's *The Outlook* and several religious magazines more parochial in nature, sounded a similar note. Theologically, ethically and sociologically, Judaism is racial, Abbott maintained. Christianity, by contrast, is human, personal, universal, and open, not narrow, "not Jewish."³³ Because the Hebrew chooses to be a spectator in society, an outsider, *The Methodist Review* postulated in 1893, he is unwelcome wherever he resides. "He is extraneous, . . . unassimilable. He may be republican, monarchist or absolutist—and that conscientiously but still he is alien in blood, creed, and natural isolation."³⁴ The American public, whether it read the popular sheets or the more staid and traditional magazines, was thus presented with a stereotype that, to the misfortune of Jews, has long been associated with the Diaspora experience.

What, then, can be said about this perplexing problem of American

30. *Leslie's Weekly*, 74, No. 1902 (February 27, 1892): 57.

31. *Life*, 13, No. 217 (January 24, 1889): 46.

32. *The Independent*, 41, No. 2128 (September 12, 1889): 17.

33. *The Outlook*, 74, No. 6, (1903): 313.

34. *The Methodist Review*, 75 (March, 1893): 29.

anti-Semitism? I have attempted to demonstrate that negative imagery and stereotyping was, indeed, a *significant* force, if not the *major* factor, in the development of American anti-Semitism; that these perceptions invaded all spheres of American intellectual and cultural life and that their use increased significantly in the Gilded Age and lasted well into the Progressive Era. Without minimizing the importance of social conflict that was brought to our attention by John Higham, I contend that the availability and near consensus of the anti-Jewish ideology made discrimination possible, if, in fact, it did not actually legitimize it. Negative imagery, rather than serving as a rationalization for prejudice after the fact, can thus be seen as a catalyst for the proliferation of anti-Jewish manifestations in America.

The historiography of American anti-Semitism, although acknowledging in varying degrees the significance of this phenomenon, has not adequately analyzed its import. Herein lies the danger. We must not be lulled by society's surface tolerance into complacency and thick-skinned insensitivity to the occasional outburst of hatred. As we have seen, anti-Semitism erupted even in those sectors of American society that were reformist and libertarian. The democratic impulse was not, and may not always be, resolute enough to overcome the psychological and social momentum of anti-Semitic stereotyping. It is true that America never visited mass physical oppression upon its Jews. But there are more subtle types of oppression—economic, social and cultural—that can be equally damaging and painful. Furthermore, the experiences of the 1930's, as well as public opinion polls, have shown how stereotyping reinforced insensitivity and misunderstanding and contributed to governmental inertia in the face of an unprecedented human tragedy. The roots of this apathy may, indeed, have been nurtured in the anti-Semitic milieu that characterized the preceding decades. It is hoped that this article may in some small way alert us historically to this situation and will lay to rest the euphoric view of the Jew in pre-1900 America to which scholars have given currency. Our most impregnable defense against prejudice lies *not* in national self-congratulation, but in the pursuit and uncovering of that elusive entity—knowledge.

Hakoah in New York (1926-1932): A New Dimension for American Jewry

BENJAMIN HOROWITZ

IT DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE THAT A HALF-CENTURY has passed since Hakoah first came to the United States in 1926. And what in the world was Hakoah? Well, it was a group of athletes, a ballclub, a team, a Jewish soccer team. It made such a splash in New York that, for a while, it seemed it would become a permanent fixture. And, because of Hakoah, soccer gained momentum, too, and showed signs of seducing the American sports fans. But both missed by just *so* much, only by a hair.

Hakoah's choice of New York City to begin its tour was a canny decision. Then, as now, Gotham was a melting pot, though the differences in those days were based more on religion than on color. A city of about 6,000,000 in 1926, it was thought to be equally split among the three major faiths, which means that there were about 2,000,000 Jews. With only a handful in Queens or Staten Island, almost one in eight of the world's 16,000,000 Jews lived in either Brooklyn, The Bronx or Manhattan.

Back in the '20s, the average Jew in the metropolis had little to cheer about. He was either an immigrant or the child of an immigrant. The breadwinner toiled long and hard for his daily loaf. Though he may not have understood much English, he knew enough to grasp the meaning of "kike," "mocky," "sheeny" and "greenhorn." He had little time and even less money to spend on any kind of entertainment, let alone sports, which he considered the exclusive province of the young or the foolish.

At the same time, the non-Jew's impression of the Hebrew immigrant was of a weakling, a dwarf, a consumptive, and the idea of a group of Jewish athletes seemed rather incongruous. The arrival of the stalwart men of Hakoah not only gave the lie to these views but imbued New York Jewry with a hitherto unknown sense of pride and self-esteem.

As a matter of fact, the involvement between Jews and sports had been a rather recent development. Its principal advocate was the physician and author, Max Nordau, who, at the fifth Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1901, had made an appeal for a metamorphosis to "muscular Judaism." Hakoah was not the first group to respond to this call but it was surely the most prominent.

Organized in Vienna in 1908 as a fourth-rate soccer club, it expanded its activities in the next decade to include many other sports. Through the years, the soccer contingent advanced to first-class status and, in 1925, it won the national championship of Austria. That year, in addition to its superlative performance in soccer, the club's swimmers, gymnasts, wres-

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tlers and hockey players also took gold medals. Thus, on the eve of Hakoah's departure for America, the organization was at the height of its popularity.

Its leaders recognized the economic potential of a trip to the United States but it is certain that they would not have come had they known what lay in store for the Viennese soccer eleven. Be that as it may, Hakoah's indefatigable president, Ignatz Koerner, arrived in New York a month before his team did. He spoke at meetings of Jewish cultural and fraternal societies and stressed the club's altruistic motives, its plans to regenerate Eastern European Jewry. He indicated that, although the players were paid professionals, any profit that the organization realized would be used to expand services to its members in Russia and Poland as well as in Austria. Since many of his listeners were immigrants from these very areas, Koerner struck a responsive chord.

Of all the Jews in New York, however, no one, perhaps, prized more the joint causes of health and charity than did the venerable philanthropist, Nathan Straus. He had been Health Commissioner of the City, was noted for his largesse in providing pasteurized milk to the poor and for installing a tuberculosis preventorium at his summer home in Lakewood, New Jersey. A sports enthusiast, Straus originally was a fan, and later became a friend, of the lightweight-boxing champion, Benny Leonard.

An ardent Zionist, Straus was smitten with the soccer squad which flaunted its Jewish heritage and wore the Shield of David boldly emblazoned on the jerseys of its blue and white uniforms. Through his efforts, Hakoah was assured of treatment accorded only to exalted dignitaries. In fact, since Straus's contacts extended to the White House, itself, the team's managers had an audience with President Calvin Coolidge. It is interesting that "Silent Cal" used more words in welcoming them and speaking of their significant contribution to soccer than he did in the following year, when he refused to run for a second term.

Hakoah repaid its debt to Straus on several occasions. His family stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the athletes on the steps of City Hall, as New York's debonair mayor, Jimmy Walker, presented the team with the keys to the city. At its first game in New York, Benny Leonard kicked off and, at the second game, the 77-year-old Straus, himself, had that honor. During the ceremonies preceding these two contests at the Polo Grounds, the opposing teams paraded around the field carrying the intertwined American and Jewish flags and stopped at the box reserved for the Straus entourage. Hakoah officials thanked the old man for his generosity and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum Band—no doubt another donee of Straus—struck up the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Hatikvah." As the stands resounded with cheers, the patriarch broke down and cried.

The spectators were unaware of it at the time but, by their very presence at each match, they were creating memorable statistics for

Hakoah. The 25,000 at the initial contest set a record for attendance at a soccer game in the United States, exceeding the previous one by 10,000. This astounding number was quickly topped, however, when 46,000 assembled for Hakoah's second game at the Polo Grounds the following week.

To achieve these figures required not only the aegis of Nathan Straus but the efforts of many others from various walks of life in New York Jewry. Among others, Hakoah's advisors and promoters included Rabbi Stephen Wise; the chess champion, Emanuel Lasker; Congressman Emanuel Celler; the Yiddish novelist, Sholem Asch; the Zionist-Revisionist, Vladimir Jabotinsky; and the ex-prizefighter, Benny Leonard.

More important, however, than the help of any single individual in advancing the sale of seats was the ploy of the garment unions—the International Ladies Garment Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers—which preempted a substantial number of tickets and sold them to their members at half-price. Since the original cost of \$5.00 for box seats and \$3.00 for reserved tickets represented a day's pay or more, the reduction in prices put them within the reach of many more clothing-workers.

If labor needed help from its unions to see Hakoah, a banker, Henri de Rothschild, required the personal intervention of a philanthropist. It was reported that the French financier arrived in New York with his young son a few days before the second game and was unable to secure tickets. When Nathan Straus learned of the problem, he invited the Rothschilds to share his box and the offer was gratefully accepted.

In its ten-game tour in 1926, Hakoah drew over 200,000—better than 20,000 per game—an astounding figure, considering the sorry state of soccer in America prior to its arrival. Only in Providence, Jersey City and St. Louis did the team fail to attract at least 10,000 per game, but in the larger cities—New York, Chicago and Philadelphia—there were at least 15,000 at each match. Most impressive was the fact that 123,000 people saw the four contests in New York—three at the Polo Grounds in Manhattan and one at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn—an average of more than 30,000 per game.

The owners of two of the soccer clubs in the area—Nathan Agar of the Brooklyn Wanderers and Morris Vandeweghe of the New York Giants—interpreted these figures as precisely the therapy required to cure their ailing sport. Convinced that the magnetism of the European stars would fatten the lean gate receipts of their own teams, they induced nine Hakoah players to sign contracts with them. The Wanderers obtained three forwards, Eisenhoffer, Neufeld and Schoenfeld, as well as a halfback, Drucker, while four forwards, Schwarcz, Pollak, Gruenwald and Haeusler, and another halfback, Guttman, went to the Giants.

The officials of Hakoah realized too late that, in filling their coffers with American currency, they had gained a Pyrrhic victory. In the pro-

cess, the principal claim to fame of the Viennese eleven, its invincible forward line, was almost wiped out and its best backfield men were lost as well.

Hakoah lodged a protest with the International Federation of Football Associations, the governing body of soccer, which had specific rules against poaching, but when the suit was disallowed, it was not pursued further, since a second trip to America was planned for 1927.

When, in fact, the team did return, the effects of the loss of its manpower were all too apparent. The second year, Hakoah won 5, lost 3 and tied 5, a respectable enough performance but not up to the standard of 1926, when it won 6, lost 2 and tied 2. Significantly, at the point in the 1927 trip where the team had played three games without a win, it was apparent it was in trouble, but help was forthcoming from Vandeweghe, owner of the Giants, who was also a sponsor of the Jewish squad's second visit; he "lent" the former Hakoah players to their old team for the remainder of the tour. This manoeuver enabled the club to give a more creditable account of itself on the field.

Nevertheless, at the box office, Hakoah was far less successful on the second trip than it had been in 1926. A shade over 120,000 people saw the team in 13 games in 1927, an average of fewer than 10,000 per game, or less than 50% of the previous year's. The resulting \$30,000 deficit compelled Dr. Koerner to resign from his post as president and, to make matters worse, four more stars were lost to American teams.¹

While these two trips to America proved disastrous for Hakoah's future in Austrian soccer, the New York clubs which purchased its players were thriving. Substantial numbers of fans came to see the Giants at New York Oval and the Wanderers at Hawthorne Field. Standing-room-only crowds frequently jammed these decrepit arenas and, from time to time, an international match or a cup game required the rental of a more capacious stadium. Vandeweghe and Agar were delighted with their coups and optimistic about the prospects for soccer in the United States. They had seen a sport which had languished for many years suddenly show signs of vitality and popularity.

With business booming in 1927, the owners of the New York soccer teams undertook new ventures. Agar sponsored the tour of another Jewish team, the Maccabees of Palestine, and Vandeweghe, one of Hakoah's "angels" that year, arranged for a night game between the European club and a combined aggregation from the Giants and Bethlehem Steel.

Perhaps the most affected of the 10,000 viewers who turned out for this event at the Polo Grounds—the first soccer game under lights in the

1. Hakoah's goalie, Fabian, and Gold, a back, went to the Giants; Wortmann, a forward, was acquired by a new team, the Nationals; and Nickolsburger, another forward, joined a minor-league team.

United States—was Charles Stoneham, who owned the field as well as the New York Giants baseball team. Indeed, he was awed by the number of customers who showed up on a Wednesday evening and decided to enlarge his own business interests to include soccer.

He proceeded to buy the franchise of a local team, Indiana Flooring, and changed its name to the New York Nationals. He would have preferred to rename it the New York Giants but Vandeweghe already had an eleven by that name. Of the Hakoah players who joined American teams in 1927, Stoneham signed Siggy Wortmann, its best remaining forward.

In their first year of operation, the Nationals won the Dewar Cup, symbol of the American championship, but Stoneham was dissatisfied because the team finished in the red. Early in 1928, anxious for his soccer enterprise to produce golden eggs as soon as possible, he announced his plans for restructuring the sport in the United States. He proposed to overhaul it completely. Its organization would be patterned on major-league baseball and there would be annual pennant winners and a soccer version of the world series. Tournaments and cup play would be eliminated. Innovations would include night games, indoor contests in cold weather, a decrease in the number of men on a team and a reduction in the size of the ball.

Stoneham believed that major-league soccer elevens, like major-league baseball teams, should be the property of affluent businessmen, exclusively. An important feature of his plan was the expulsion of the less prosperous clubs to a minor league. The suggestion that the American Soccer League should comprise only those clubs which could support huge, well-appointed stadiums found a ready audience among a few of his baseball colleagues who already owned such real estate and who believed that professional soccer was an excellent opportunity for expansion without a large investment.

But the owner of the Nationals found it far easier to convince these baseball magnates than the soccer fraternity. In fact, as soon as the American Soccer League adopted one of Stoneham's proposals, calling for a ban on tournaments, it became involved in a legal battle. In late 1928, three teams violated this rule and were suspended by the League, which, in turn, was ousted by the United States Football Association, sponsor of the tourney.

At the same time, suits were instituted by the Nationals and the Wanderers against former Hakoah players who had participated in the cup competition and had resigned from their clubs in order to do so. Stoneham and Agar tried to prevent the dissidents from joining other teams. By the time the smoke of litigation had cleared, a brand-new soccer organization had emerged and the American Soccer League barely managed to survive.

Among the members of the newly-formed Eastern League was the New York Hakoah, composed chiefly of the Jewish athletes who had

joined American teams in 1926 and 1927. Not a single one of the former stars from Vienna remained in the American Soccer League.

Agar, a pioneer in introducing the sport in the United States, denounced the ex-Hakoah players who had deserted his Wanderers for the New York Hakoah. He argued that New York City could support no more than two or three elevens and predicted an early demise for the Eastern League, which had interposed half a dozen additional clubs in the metropolitan area.

Although events subsequently confirmed Agar's sagacity as an observer of the American soccer scene, the auspicious debut of the New York Hakoah (1928–1929) seemed to refute his dire prophesy. The stir that it created recalled the heyday of its ancestor, the Vienna Hakoah, which had been acclaimed and idolized only a few years earlier.

During its first season, the new team's followers flocked everywhere to see their heroes. Whether Hakoah was at one end of the Bronx or at an equally inaccessible field in the hinterlands of Brooklyn did not matter to the adherents from the Lower East Side, Harlem, Brownsville, Williamsburg, East New York, Tremont or the South Bronx. In fact, there were more than 20,000 spectators at Dexter Park in Cypress Hills, where the Jewish eleven won the national championship in 1929. Had a major-league ballpark been available—a condition which did not obtain at the time, because of the fracas between the Eastern League and Stoneham—there would have been a much larger crowd. As it was, however, every seat in Dexter Park was taken and additional benches had to be installed. Still, not all of the customers could be seated; at the sidelines were many standees who had to be restrained, periodically, from surging onto the field. In addition, an uncounted number of viewers, who could not be accommodated at the field, watched the proceedings from neighboring rooftops and hills.

On its way to victory in the tournament, Hakoah tallied 22 points to its rivals' 3. In the last two games, it scored five times while blanking its western opponents, Madison Kennel; each of the New York forwards, Eisenhoffer, Wortmann, Schwarcz, Gruenwald and Haeusler—all from the original Vienna Hakoah—accounted for one of the final five goals.

Although Hakoah's rooters in 1929 were still preponderantly Jewish, there were non-Jews as well. To some, the team connoted a New York, rather than a Jewish, soccer club. A few had switched their allegiance from the New York Giants that year, when the latter were beaten by Hakoah in the eastern finals.

The two teams had a number of things in common. Both belonged to Morris Vandeweghe, who, at the incursion of Charles Stoneham into the American Soccer League, steered his clubs out of the older association and into the Eastern League. Vandeweghe's teams also shared Starlight Park where they either opposed each other or played against other

elevens in alternate halves of a double-header. Consequently, one team's fans learned about the other by osmosis.

Late in 1929, Hakoah was riding the crest of the wave. On its way to the championship, it had not only retained its old following but had picked up new fans. It was not even set back when its ties to Vandeweghe were severed by a ruling of the United States Football Association, which prohibited ownership of more than one team by one man.

In fact, the Jewish squad's position in American soccer seemed even more secure. Its new owners became reconciled with Stoneham and Agar and, after the disappearance of the Eastern League, New York Hakoah's application for admission to the American Soccer League was accepted. It had access, once again, to the Polo Grounds and Ebbets Field, which had been "off limits" to members of the Eastern League during the tussle with Stoneham.

Yet, ironically, just when the outlook for Hakoah and for soccer in America seemed very bright, indeed, interest in both began to wane. In seeking the causes for this loss in popularity one ought not overlook the pernicious effects of the Depression. It is not irrelevant that a large part of Hakoah's partisans were factory-workers in industries which were hit the earliest and the hardest by the financial crisis. When these proletarians lost their jobs, a sizeable segment of spectators was cut off from the sport. An illustration of just how bad things were in 1930 is the fact that the New York soccer clubs engaged in several contests for the benefit of the unemployed, among whom were a high proportion of their own followers.

The lack of construction work during the Depression also proved detrimental to New York Hakoah. When the new management took over the reins from Vandeweghe, its top priority was to build a field in Brooklyn, but this objective did not get beyond the planning stage. The fact that the team never had a stadium with which it could be identified was a definite disadvantage.

By 1931, the team found itself playing most home games at a small high-school field in Brooklyn, Commercial Field, which could accommodate not many more than 3,000 fans. Still, considering the erosion of Hakoah's customers, the area was large enough. In its struggle to remain solvent, the Jewish club tried night games, international matches, charity games, a trip to South America and competitions against local players from different ethnic groups.

But nothing could induce a higher attendance. Only once, during the Depression, in a game against an Irish team from Scotland, the Glasgow Celtics, was Hakoah able to bring out as many as 20,000 and to achieve these numbers required the concerted efforts of the Zionist Organization of America and of Irish, Scottish and Jewish politicians who touted the event for weeks as a means of cementing relations between Jews and

Catholics. The reception for the teams by Mayor Walker at City Hall was reminiscent of the welcome extended to the Vienna Hakoah five years earlier. But there the resemblance stopped.

Otherwise, soccer in New York returned to the lassitude of the days before 1926. When the hardy cadre who, in the late '20s, turned out by the thousands for Hakoah's games—even in the worst storms and bitterest cold—dwindled to a few hundred, the most optimistic realized that it was time to quit.

And so, at the start of the 1933 season, the team, a casualty of the desperation of the era, was no longer entered in the lists. Some of its players sought employment in other fields. Of the athletes who continued in the sport, a number returned to Austria and were rehired by the original Hakoah organization. Two of its scrappiest players attained considerable renown as coaches. One of them, Erno Schwarcz, was noted for many years in soccer circles as the triple-threat, owner-player-manager of the New York Americans, and was the only star of Hakoah ever admitted to the United States Soccer Hall of Fame. The other, Bela Guttman, the team's incomparable center halfback, trained championship elevens in Europe and South America. After World War II, he managed a Portuguese team which took the European Cup and a Brazilian aggregation of his captured the world championship.

Dating as far back as 1926, soccer clubs named Hakoah were formed in various cities of the United States but none attained a vestige of the prominence of the original stars from Vienna, who enthralled the populace of New York and even today remain a unique experience in the memory of a number of elderly and late middle-aged American Jews. After having seen the team perform in New York in 1926, Sholem Asch wrote:

There are many ways in which to serve God. The new, holy idea has certainly arisen out of Jewish sports. You of the Hakoah were granted an opportunity to realize it.

Our Founding Fathers

Unrecognized Patriots—The Jews in the American Revolution. By SAMUEL REZNECK. Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1975. 299 pp. \$13.95.

Reviewed by BERTRAM W. KORN

PROFESSOR Rezneck has performed a valuable service in the publication of this book. He has doggedly pursued every clue about the participation of Jews in the military, economic and political aspects of the Revolutionary cause. Unlike most of his predecessors who assembled scattered notes relating to only part of the story, Rezneck has attempted to compile a complete account, following his figures to the grave, into governmental archives and even into legend. He has not tried to glamorize the facts, nor to render false honors, but simply and plainly to reveal the truth.

What is the truth? The vast majority of Jewish businessmen supported the Revolutionary regime, though some were Tories. Many dozens of Jews, perhaps more than one hundred, donned a uniform to fight for the new country. Francis Salvador of South Carolina was undoubtedly the first Jew to die for American freedom. Two Pennsylvanians, Solomon Bush and David Salisbury Franks, both achieved the rank of lieutenant-colonel, Franks having the very bad luck to be assigned to Benedict Arnold's staff at the time of the general's treachery—but he was able to prove that he was not implicated.

American Jewish life was disrupted during the war, and the only congregation to maintain its continuity was Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel. Jewish refugees

crowded into Philadelphia from Newport, New York (including the Hazan, Gershom Mendes Seixas), Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston and Savannah. It was the veritable Jerusalem of the Revolution. But, after the war, most of the strangers left town, returned home, and bequeathed a mortgage on the new synagogue to Mikveh Israel's leaders.

One of those leaders was Haym Salomon, whom a recent U.S. commemorative postage stamp mistakenly reports as being "responsible for raising most of the money needed to finance the American Revolution and later to save the new nation from collapse." That Salomon was patriotically devoted to his new home is altogether true. He made many sacrifices for it, and refused to speculate in its currency and credit; he loaned money to some national political and military leaders, and acted very responsibly as agent for the French, Spanish and Dutch governments as well as on behalf of Robert Morris' Office of Finance. But he did not "finance" the Revolution; he only helped. A large proportion of the approximately 2000 Jews helped, though they were a tiny handful. They did their share, but they produced no Jefferson, Adams, Franklin or Washington. No one should exaggerate their contribution. Rezneck does not, and he explodes some of the myths still making the rounds.

What was the importance of the Jews of the Revolutionary period? First, that they did their share. Second, that they were visibly present, a minority that could not be overlooked as the government's leaders prepared to draft the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Third, that in Philadelphia they were vocal enough to petition for equality and

to give the lie to public anti-Jewish propaganda. Fourth, that they secured from President Washington's hand those three wonderful letters acknowledging the meaning of tolerance and freedom for them and for all Americans. No mean achievement for a tiny community of two thousand Jews. We are grateful to them for their part, and to Dr. Rezneck for bringing

together in one volume all of the known data relating to them. It will help American Jews to feel related Jewishly to the Bicentennial celebrations, not only as beneficiaries of freedom, but as partners in its creation.

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JUDAISM